

Bound I.
OUR
SAVIOUR'S
MIRACLES
VINDEDICATED.

On Occasion of a late

DISCOURSE
ON THE
MIRACLES OF OUR SAVIOUR.

By THOMAS WOOLSTON, some-
time FELLOW of Sidney College in
Cambridge.

WITH AN

A P P E N D I X

Chiefly relating to the present Controversy
between the Advocates for Christian Revela-
tion and their Adversaries.

Humbly addressed to the Right Reverend the LORD
BISHOP of LONDON:

By T. RAY.

L O N D O N:

Printed for JOHN MARSHALL, at the Bible in
Grace church-Street, and sold by the AUTHOR, at
MR. WILLIAMS's, in Falcon Court, against St.
Dunstan's Church in Fleet-Street. 1727. Price 1s.





TO THE

Right Reverend Father in GOD

E D M U N D,

Lord Bishop of LONDON.

My LORD,



WITH the utmost Humility and Deference to your Lordship's eminent Station, Character and Abilities, this mean Performance is presented to you by the unworthy Author.

It is not that I pretend there is any thing so considerable in it as to deserve the Honour and Advantage of so high a Patronage as Yours; much less would I presume hereby to take Sanctuary in so great a Name for all, no nor even any one

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of the Errors or Imperfections that may be in it.

But, My Lord, The Cause I endeavour to maintain is, I think verily, the Cause of Truth; and this encourages me to hope, that even a feeble Attempt for the Defence of it, from one that is a hearty Well-Wisher to it, will meet with your Lordship's Indulgence and favourable Acceptance. And if Mr *Woolston*, or his Friends, should in earnest agree to appeal to your Lordship's great Judgment, as to the Management of this Controversy on both Sides, I would most freely acquiesce in their Choice, and very readily join Issue with them.

I am sensible of the encreasing Numbers of those, who are for opposing the Christian
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Religion, and the Authority of those Sacred Writings from whence it is extracted; and hence Mr. *Woolston's* Piece, however flighted by some, has not fail'd of having several Admirers, who think it affords them just Ground of new Triumphs against that side of the Question, on which (I do my self the Honour to say) I am with your Lordship. And yet he says, *Your taking him for an Infidel was such a Mistake as he thought no Scholar could have made: If he would pretend by this little Insinuation to detract from your Lordship's very considerable Character and Figure in the Commonwealth of Letters; how vain alas is his Attempt! As for my Part, I have so little Reputation, as a Scholar, to lose,*

lose, that I may venture it to his Mercy; and must say (tho' I do not chuse to give any Man a Name that is disagreeable to him, yet) I really don't well know what to *take Mr. Woolston* for if not for an Unbeliever of the Scriptures.

As to the *Offence*, which he says he has given your *Lordship*, and your *Prosecution* of him thereupon, I am not at all concerned in it. I had never heard of that, nor even of Mr. *Woolston* himself, till upon his publication of this Pamphlet, nor ever read that obnoxious Book that brought this unfortunate Person under your Lordship's Displeasure. But, My Lord, he shall have no room to say I take the Advantage from his Misfortunes, to insult or triumph

umph over him. So far from that, that had I the Honour of any Interest in your Lordship; could I be certain, Favour might be shewn him without a dishonourable Reflection upon your Lordship's Judgment and former Dealings with him, or that his Offence is as capable of Mitigation, as I doubt not your Lordship's Breast is of Goodness, Generosity, and Compassion; I could easily find in my Heart to become an humble Suitor to your Lordship, that you would vouchsafe some Instances of Pity and Tenderneſs to this unhappy Gentleman.

I am very apprehensive, My Lord, there may be many things in this Composure of mine, that I might well be ashamed to offer to your Lordship's exact and discern-

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discerning Judgment; but you will not reckon upon any great Matters from one, that has always lived in the Shade of Life, and who cannot boast of any great Abilities or Improvements. I must therefore crave leave to hope for that Candour and Indulgence from your Lordship, which one in my Case stands in need of, and which will lay a lasting Conviction upon me, how much I ought to be,

My Lord,

Your Lordship's

Most obedient and

Most humble Servant,

London

Sept. 16 1721

T. RAY.



O U R
S A V I O U R's
MIRACLES Vindicated.

IT has oftentimes been the Subject of Speculation, whence it comes to pass, that so many Controversies have from time to time engag'd the Thoughts, and even worn out the Pens of learned Men, and yet so little real Service has been done by them. The evincing and clearing of Truth, and the Detection of Error, are certainly the valuable Designs that ought to be pursu'd. And tho' commonly these Designs are pretended to by the Writers in Controversy, yet it's too obvious that the Effect is rarely answerable to so good a Profession: Perhaps a little Distinction may help us in some measure to account for the Matter. There are then, I think verily, some Truths of such a Nature as are extremely hard, if not even impossible, for us to attain to the Knowledge of. With me, I confess, 'tis no Difficulty to conceive there may be Millions of Truths which the Mind of Man, at
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least in its present State, will never arrive to; and therefore I think it's good Advice Mr. *Lock* gives us, to examine our own Powers and Faculties to see what Enquiries they are suited to, and capacitated for; and not in vain to perplex our selves about Matters out of our reach. But it seems very unreasonable to me to suppose, that the other sort of Truths, which are immediately necessary, and useful for the Purposes of human Nature, should be so hard to understand. I can't therefore, in this Case, but ascribe our Ignorance and Errors to the Carelessness of our own Examination; the Neglect of forming our Minds to a due Impartiality, which is so highly laudable, as well as absolutely necessary for the Discovery of Truth; and sometimes, which is worst of all, they may be imputed to downright Insincerity; when suffering our Minds to be enslav'd and influenc'd by the most unworthy and sordid Motives, we obstinately shut our Eyes against the Light, and resist the Entrance of that Truth, which would otherwise strike upon our Faculties with a convincing Evidence and Force. The Passions seem to me to have nothing to do in our Searches after Truth, or in communicating our own Acquisitions of it to others. And it seems highly requisite to be insisted upon, that they, especially, who write in a publick Way for the Information of Mankind, should maintain a steady and inviolable Regard for Truth, and use the best Methods they are able to facilitate the Reception of it by others.

I was led into some of these Thoughts by reflecting upon the Piece before me; and to speak freely, I can hardly think that any Man, but one who had very mean and contemptible Thoughts of the Understanding and Dignity of his Fellow Creatures, could have publish'd a piece in such a Spirit to the World, or treated such a Subject in so ludicrous a Strain. Nay, there is certainly a Deference due even to our Ad-

versaries

versaries themselves. If it is no Crime for *us* to differ from *them*, no more is it for *them* to differ from *us*. And therefore as we should expect, if we our Selves are apprehended in a Mistake, that our Charitable Friends, who offer at our Conviction, would fairly represent our Sense, exhibit plain Reasons to us, and draw none but just Inferences, and nervous Conclusions; and all this with that Seriousness, as shews 'em in earnest to assist us in recovering from Error; so they have equal Reason to demand the same from us. And if we act otherwise towards them, we very justly fall under that Censure, which in such a Case, we are forward enough to cast upon them.

Our Author introduces his Discourse with an Observation of the Usefulness of this Controversy, which he believes will end in an absolute Demonstration of *Jesus's Messiahship* from *Prophecy*. Now as what ever is useful, must be of proportionable Consequence to Mankind: So methinks it's great Pity but that such an Argument should be manag'd as the Importance of it deserves. An useful Controversy, I think, can have no other Meaning in it, than that the Resolution or Decision of it, in the Affirmative or Negative, will be very advantageous. Our Author is very frequent and express in his Protestations for the Affirmative Side, and that *Jesus* is the *Messiah*. And in his Declaration against the Negative. thus* *This I do, not for the Service of Infidelity, which has no Place in my Heart; but for the Honour of the Holy Jesus.* † *In Maintenance of my Opinion to the Honour of our Messiah, and the Defence of Christianity, I write this Treatise, &c.*

Again, § he tells us *the Service of Infidelity, is the farthest of any Thing from his Heart.* * He also tells the Clergy with Reference to what he has said about

* p. 2. † p. 3. § p. 6. * p. 62.

Miracles. *And this I have done (give me leave repeatedly to declare it) not for the Service of your unbelieving Adversaries, &c.* And lastly in his Dedication * he assures my Lord Bishop of London he is the farthest of any Man from being engag'd in the Cause of Infidels. Nay, he insinuates as if he might even be for the Persecution of them, but that he is apprehensive it looks as if a Man was distrustful of the Truth of Christianity, and conscious of his own Inability to defend it. And therefore he seems rather inclined to leave that good Cause to God himself, and the Sword of the Spirit without calling upon the Civil Magistrate for his Aid and Assistance.

Let us now see in what Manner he undertakes the Defence of the Affirmative, which he appears so zealous to maintain. It seems then that Prophecy, according to him, is the only † Way to prove Jesus to be the Messiah. But as Prophecy, in this Case, is no more than foretelling the Marks or Characters such or such a Person should bear: I can't see how the bare foretelling those Marks or Characters can demonstrate the Person without his own Appearance, and the Appearances of those Characters upon him. Now, as to these Characters, our Author seems to allow that Miracles were foretold of Jesus, by what he says upon his Quotation from the Prophet Isaiah. § But then he is for taking the Characters there mentioned, and indeed, all our Saviour's Miracles, not in the *Literal*, but *Spiritual* or *Allegorical* Sense, as he calls it. I shall afterwards have Occasion to discourse more upon the Head of Allegories; but, for the present Argument, I observe that Jesus cannot be prov'd to be the Messiah only by Prophecy. The Things predicted must be fulfilled in him, even tho' they should be supposed to mean, according to him, Allegorical Miracles, before we can be satisfied of his

* p. 5.

† p. 1.

§ p. 15.

Authority. Prophecies, I should think, signify nothing at all independently of the Person to whom they relate, or the Events that are foretold by them: There must be a Relation and Connexion supposed between them, and the Prophecies, either in whole or in part, must be brought to pass, before we can determine which was the Person intended by 'em. Our Author himself seems aware of the Necessity of such a Connexion between Prophecies and those Miracles that were the Accomplishment of them, however carelessly in other Places he seems to neglect the Consideration of it. And therefore, tho' he is writing professedly about Miracles, yet he tells us that he writes to reduce the Clergy to the good old Way of interpreting Prophecies and Oracles*. I might ask him then, Are these Prophecies accomplish'd even in his *Allegorical* Sense or not? Or since he tells us, † that the Prophet *Isaiah*, Ch. xxxv. Ver. 5, 6. speaks not of Bodily Blindness, but of the spiritual Distempers of the Soul: Does it appear, as yet, that *Jesus* has wrought these mighty Works or not? If he does, then is he, according to Mr. *W*—'s own Way of Reasoning, prov'd the *Messiah*, not *only* from Prophecy, but from the actual Accomplishment of the Things foretold in it. If he says these Miracles are *not* fulfill'd, it's then impossible that any Prophecies or Predictions whatsoever should prove him to be the *Messiah*. We must be entirely at a Loss about his Authority; and as bad must have been the Case of his admired Fathers, who, as he tells us, § adjourn the Accomplishment of those Prophecies to Christ's spiritual Advent: Which Words, if they mean any Thing, seem to me to signify some State and Season of Things distant from their own. Now if they did not live to see the Accomplishment of these Prophecies in the Allegorical Sense, I can't see what

* p. 3, 62.

† p. 16.

§ p. 16.

Ground they themselves could have to believe his *Messiahship*. So that he has prov'd *those holy Venerable and learned Preachers of the Gospel, in the first Ages of the Church* (upon whom he goes on to bestow such *extravagant Praises* *) could have had no Reason to believe, in the *Messiah*; and so must have been Infidels as well as the rest. Besides, how can he pretend they took our Religion from the Hands of the *Apostles*? for 'tis certain most of the Fathers he has quoted, flourish'd at a great Distance of Time from them; nor has our Author thought fit to favour us with any Thoughts from *Barnabas, Clemens, Ignatius, Polycarp, Hermas*, and several others of the first Christian Writers.

Our Author next goes on to discover in what Way he designs the Defence of Christianity, and the Vindication of the Honour of the Holy *Jesus*. Says he, † to *shew that there's no Sanctuary for them in the Miracles of our Saviour, I write this Discourse*. But I should have thought Mr. *W* —, if he designed any Service to the Points above mentioned, should not have contented himself with endeavouring to overthrow the things he thought would *not* support 'em, but favour'd us with his Thoughts upon those that *would*. Suppose now that another Person should publish a Vindication of the Existence of a *God*, and because innate Ideas have been, perhaps unreasonably, supposed a Proof of that Point; would it be thought a sufficient, nay, a just or proper Defence of that Truth, for a Man only to endeavour a Demonstration that there were no innate Ideas? I am sure neither Mr. *Lock*, nor any other serious Enquirer after Truth, that I know of, has serv'd us so. The Disproof of a particular Branch of the Affirmative, is very far from being a Proof of the Affirmative.

* p. 5.

† p. 2.

Besides, a Demonstration *ex absurdo*, is always reckoned much inferior to a direct Proof

Our Author is very profuse in his Encomiums upon the Fathers, * though possibly he may like it better that I should use his own Expressions upon another Occasion. † *On this Head* he is *Copious and Rhetorical*, and many notable and florid Harangues has he made on it. I am as willing as he can be to pay a just and due Respect to the Fathers; but let us hear the Reasons of his profound Admiration and almost implicit Belief of their Authority. He says they took our Religion from the Hands of the Apostles and Apostolical Men, so did several Hereticks, and some of the grossest Corrupters of Christianity; nay, Judas took our Religion from the Hands of Christ, and was an Apostle himself: Not that I would make such an odious Comparison with the Fathers, but only to shew the inconclusiveness of his Argument. *They died some of them, and suffered for the Doctrine they taught.* But dying and suffering of either Teachers or Learners, will never prove the Truth of any Doctrine, nor the Persons suffering to be in the right. The utmost it can prove, is, the Sufferers real Persuasion of the Truth of what they die for. Besides he may, by this Way of Reasoning, prove Persons of any Religion to be in the right; there being, perhaps, few Religions in the World but what have had some Sufferers, if not even Martyrs for it. *They professedly and confessedly were endu'd with Divine and extraordinary Gifts of the Spirit.* But he goes a good way in answering this himself. §

These Gifts may be given apart and separately; one of them may be conferred on this Man, and another of them on his Neighbour. There is no Necessity, that any two or more of these Gifts should meet in one Man. To argue that a Man, who has one of these Gifts, must

* P. 4. 5.

† P. 14.

§ P. 12.

needs have the other, is very inconclusive and false Reasoning. — And I think, that we may as well say, that the strongest Man is the wisest; or that a good Physician must needs be a good Casuist; or that the best Mathematician is the ablest Statesman; as that the Fathers, because they were endu'd with divine and extraordinary Gifts of the Spirit, such as theirs were, ought to be received as the Guides of our Consciences, the Directors of our Understandings, and perfectly free from all false Notions and Mistakes about the Miracles of our Saviour. Upon the whole I am free to say that the Piety and Learning of several of the Fathers, deserves great Esteem and Veneration; and whatever Draughts of primitive genuine Christianity, are produced from those of them, who lived in or nearest the Apostolical Age, having escaped the Corruption and Forgery, too many of their Writings have suffered, are without doubt worthy of particular Regard. But for all that, I see no Necessity of giving into an Opinion merely, as it were out of Complaisance to their Authority. It is upon the sole Authority of *Jesus Christ* and the Apostles, he himself commissioned, that I receive all the Doctrines and Precepts of Christianity I think necessary to be contended for. And though perhaps the Fathers, by their Commentaries upon Scripture, and Accounts of primitive Usage, may sometimes serve to illustrate the evangelical Writings; yet I confess I do not see an Obligation for any such mighty *Resignation* to their Authority, as this Gentleman seems to profess. And though my Profession of Respect to them is not so *Copious and Rhetorical* as his, yet I hope to make it appear that I do not come behind him in the Evidences of real Value and Respect for them, by doing them more Justice than he has done them, and giving perhaps a fairer Representation of their Sense.

We are now come to the first general Head of Mr. W—'s Discourse, wherein he will shew that the Miracles of healing all manner of bodily Diseases, which

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which *Jesus* was justly fam'd for, are none of the proper Miracles of the *Messiah*, neither are they so much as a good Proof of his divine Authority to found a Religion.* He allows that *Jesus* was justly fam'd for the Miracles of healing all Manner of Bodily Diseases. I ask then, Are these Miracles ever mentioned by any of the Prophets amongst the Characters of the *Messiah* or not? If they are, then these were the proper Miracles of the *Messiah*: For whatever Miracles they foretold, as the Characters of the Person, whom they call'd the *Messiah*, must be the proper Miracles of that *Messiah*. If Miracles are never mentioned by any of the Prophets, it will follow, that the Description they give of him is defective, by leaving out some very distinguishing Marks and plain Criterions of that Person, whom they pointed out to the World; which Defect I am apt to believe Mr. *W*— will not impute to them, since he reckons upon it that this present Controversy will end in an *absolute Demonstration of Jesus's Messiahship from Prophecy*; whereas I can't understand how it can be call'd an *absolute Demonstration*, if some very material Parts of his Character are omitted; as the healing all manner of Bodily Diseases, without the Use and Application of ordinary Means, certainly is: And especially the healing of Diseases and Infirmities in which, in all likelihood, the Application of no ordinary Means would have been successful. If he means by the *Miracles of healing all manner of Bodily Diseases, being none of the proper Miracles of the Messiah*, that they were not Performances great and glorious enough to be wrought by the *Messiah*; (as he seems to intimate in some Parts of his Book) I answer, there can be no just Grounds to derogate from the Miracles of *Jesus*, because they were Operations upon the Bodies of Men. If these were Miracles foretold of him

by the Prophets, which our Author has not disprov'd, nor so much as pretended to examine the Point, (except in one Place, where his Arguing is very defective) I say, if these were the Miracles foretold of him, *so far* there is a Correspondence and Harmony between the Description of the Prophets, and the Characters that were visible upon him. Besides, there is room for the Display of a supernatural or miraculous Power upon the Bodies, as well as the Spirits of Men. And tho' it is true, Miracles of any sort will prove nothing abstracted from all other Considerations, as our Author has unfairly put the Case, yet in Conjunction with some other Circumstances, which he might have learn'd, if he pleas'd, from Mr. *Chandler*, they might be made appear to be the proper Miracles of the *Messiah*, and a good Proof of his divine Authority to found and introduce a Religion into the World.

He proceeds in order to make out his Point, to *consider first in general, what was the Opinion of the Fathers about the Writings of the Evangelists, in which the Life of Christ is recorded.* But the Opinion of the Fathers he has quoted, is not in Opposition to, but in Confirmation of, the Credibility of the Evangelical Historians, and the Matters of Fact related by them. And however some of them have thought fit to allegorize several Passages of Scripture, and particularly those relating to our Saviour's Miracles; yet they are far from denying, but sufficiently acknowledge them to be literally true. So that I shall be the less concerned about their Glosses upon Scripture, nor indeed think them of any Weight to determine my Judgment, where Reason and Scripture are repugnant to their Opinions. I own for my Part *I have not had the Honour and Happiness of much of their Acquaintance*, as our Author boasts he has had, and therefore 'tis no great Wonder that I could not in some Places easily trace his Quotations from them, especially as he has quoted them in so general a Way.

Way. In one Place I had nine, in another ten, and in another, sixteen Leaves in Folio to look over, to find the Passages he referred to; he having not been so obliging as to mention the Page in so much as one Quotation from them, which with mentioning the Edition he used, might have been readily found out. He gives us his own Word for it, *that it is no other than just Reasoning, clear Truth, and primitive Doctrine about Jesus's Miracles that he advances* *; but had he sent us directly to the very Passages of the Fathers, it would not only have saved me a great deal of Trouble, but have been also a much better Vindication of his Fairness, than such high Encomiums of his Performance from his own Mouth. A Man that writes in publick, ought to do it for the Instruction and Benefit of Mankind, and to make Truth as accessible as may be; but this Author must know, that even learned Men do not always think it worth while to hunt thro' whole Books and Treatises of the Fathers for a particular Line or two; so that he can't think it strange if I sometimes save my self the Labour of following him thro' such dark Citations, who make so little Pretence to that Character. But it seems very surprising to me, that when he quotes the Words of the Fathers, he should so often give a disingenuous Turn to, and Representation of their Sense, in his own Translation of them; thus for Instance, in his fourth Quotation, *Origen*, indeed does say, *That the Things done by Jesus, were Symbols of those Things which are continually brought to pass by the Power of Christ.* But he has crouded something into his Translation not contained in the Quotation, and laid an Emphasis where there is none in that Father, *viz. whatever Jesus did in the Flesh, was BUT Typical and Symbolical, of what he would do in the Spirit.* And so Quotation

the fifth, *Origen* does say, that the *several Infirmities* our Saviour then healed in the People, are referred to the *Spiritual Infirmities* of Souls; but his Translation puts an unreasonable Force upon the Words, by saying those bodily Diseases were NO OTHER than Figures, &c.

We have at length Light enough, amidst all this Writer's ambiguous Language, to see that he owns and must maintain, that the Miracles of healing bodily Diseases (whether the proper Miracles of the *Messiah* or not) were actually accomplish'd by *Jesus*. In laying down this first Head we are upon, he declares *Jesus* was justly fam'd for these Miracles of healing all manner of bodily Diseases: But how could he be fam'd at all, and much less justly fam'd for them, if he never wrought them? And these Fathers he here quotes, of whose Faith he professes himself to be, not only suppose, but plainly assert, that these Miracles were actually wrought by him in the Flesh. * "Whatsoever *Jesus* did in the Flesh, &c." and "the several BODILY Diseases which he healed, &c." So also † upon the Authority of the Fathers, he tells us the "Miracles that *Jesus* did then, were no more than the Shadow of some more powerful and mystical Operations. — Of which those done in the Flesh, were but Type and Figure". Nay, § he gives us his own Opinion, that he don't question but *Jesus* had all the Gifts and Powers of the Spirit that are mentioned, 1 Cor. Ch. xii. in a most superlative Degree. Now the Gift of healing is one of them, which must in that Place signify the healing bodily Diseases, since the Operation is applied to Men; for our Author undertakes to assure us, * that the Cure of *Spiritual Infirmities* is a Godlike Work, above the Imitation of Man or of *Anti-Christ*. But since he is so much

* Vide his Translation of the fourth and fifth Quotation.

† P. 9.

§ P. 12.

* P. 18.

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resolv'd to abide by the Opinion of the Fathers, and he has made, I think, the most use of the Names of *Origen* and *St. Austin*; I shall be particular in delivering their Sense, tho' I could easily produce sufficient Testimonies from the rest. *Origen*, * speaking of the *Pharisees* and *Sadducees*, says, that they not being content with the Wonders our Saviour wrought in healing all manner of Diseases and Infirmities in the People, and other Miracles which he perform'd in the Sight of very many Spectators, were desirous that he would also shew them a Sign from Heaven: Supposing, as I imagine, that Signs done upon Earth might possibly not be from God; wherefore they did not scruple to say that *Jesus* cast out Devils by *Beelzebub*, the Prince of Devils; but they thought a Sign from Heaven could not be shewn by *Beelzebub* or any other wicked Power. He afterwards represents them as inexcusable, that they did not discern the Words of the Prophets, fulfill'd in the Works of *Jesus*, which could by no Means be wrought by any wicked Power to call back a departed Soul (referring, no doubt, to the Resurrection of *Lazarus*) that after four Days it should return from the Grave, was the Work of him only who had heard from the Father this Proposal. Let us make Man in our own Image and Likeness. Moreover, to command the Winds, and calm the troubled Sea, was in the Power of none but him who made all Things, and even the Sea and Winds themselves. What else did he declare to those qui videre Poterant (I suppose he means those who received their Sight) than that he was truly God who could do such Works; and concerning which, he said to *John's Disciples*, Go tell *John* what Things you hear, and see, the Blind receive their Sight.

St. August. also evidently declares the Reality of those Facts. †

* In *Mat.* xvi. 1. p. 33, 34 † *Tom.* 5. *Serm.* 88. p. 470. Simul & hoc consequens est, ut noverimus omnia miracula, quæ Corporaliter fecit, valere ad admonitionem nostram ~~et~~ oculos reddidit cæcis, quos erat utique mors aliquando clausura: Resuscitavit *Lazarum*, iterum

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Let me add here also the Opinion of St. *Jerome*, and the rather, as he is one upon whose Judgment our Author seems to lay some Stress, by making use of his Authority two or three Times in this Controversy. *

I am glad that our Author is at length sensible that it is necessary to come closer to the Purpose, † and therefore he will now *let us see how indifferently, he had almost said contemptibly, the Fathers speak of the Miracles of Jesus, &c.* He has here cull'd out a Passage from St. *Irenæus*, very different from the Design of it: *Irenæus* does not, as this Writer would misrepresent him, go upon a Comparison between the Works of Christ upon the Body, and those done upon the Soul; but his Discourse is upon the Resurrection: And he is arguing how reasonable it is to believe, that those who had the Benefit of Bodily Cures by Christ upon Earth, should also have the

moriturum; & quæcunque ad salutem Corporum fecit, non ad hoc fecit, ut sempiterna essent: cum tamen daturus sit etiam ipsi Corpori in fine sempiternam salutem. Sed quia illa, quæ non videbantur, non credebantur; per ista Temporalia, quæ videbantur, ædificabat fidem ad illa, quæ non videbantur.

To this Passage of St. *Austin*, may be added another from him which our Author has imperfectly given us in his seventh Quotation. It stands thus: Factum quidem est, & ita, ut narratur, impletum; sed tamen ipsa, quæ à Domino facta sunt, alicujus significantia erant.

* Quum Historiæ habuerint fundamenta, tunc spiritualis intelligentiæ culmen accipiant: Ut vere Christus de Virgine natus sit; vere *Lazarus* mortuum suscitavit; vere ad tactum ejus ἀμωπποῦσα sanata sit; vere in adventu Domini cæci viderint, claudi cucurrerint, contractæ manus extensæ sint, lepra mundata sit.

† 'Tis true indeed, after having asserted these Miracles of Jesus to be literally true, as our Divines believe them, he allegorizes them, as the Fathers were very prone to do: Yet he is very far from doing this to the Disparagement of the Truth and Reality of the Facts themselves. Agreeably to this Method and Humour of Writing he tells us, a little before the Words I have quoted, that not only did Christ build up Eve out of Adam's Rib for a Type of the Church; but also daily builds up Believers and Members of his Body. Hieron. op. tom. 3. p. 1448. Par. Ed.

† P. 9.

greater

greater Benefit of being raised up hereafter to an incorruptible Life; as any one will see by considering the Passage at full Length, which I here present the Reader with. *

But he is guilty of very foul Play with his Favourite St. *Austin*. That Father is representing the Murmurs and the Scoffs of the Enemies of Christianity, against the Miracles of *Jesus*, which this impartial Writer very roundly gives us, as if St. *Austin* had been declaring his own Opinion. Nay, St. *Austin* mentions the Evidence and Confirmation from Prophecy to be so strong, that even they themselves were overcome by it. But let us see how the Passage it self stands. †

After the Citation from St. *Austin* in this ungenerous Way, he adds, *accordingly Moses and our Saviour himself, confess that false Prophets and false Christs will do Miracles*: Accordingly! According to what? To St. *Austin* doth he mean? No sure. But it's no Wonder indeed, that a Man who can allow himself the Liberty of making such strange Quotations, should make as strange Connexions. Well, it seems *Moses* and our Saviour confess that false Prophets and false Christs would do Miracles; and suppose they do,

* Et quam enim causam habebat carnis Membra curare, & restituere in pristinum Characterem, si non habebant salvari, quæ ab illo curata fuerunt? Si enim temporalis erat ab eo utilitas, nihil grande præstitit his, qui ab eo curati sunt. Aut quomodo dicunt non esse capacem carnem vitæ, quæ est ab eo, quæ percepit curationem ab eo? Vita enim per curationem, incorruptela autem per vitam efficitur. Qui igitur curationem confert, hic & vitam: Et qui vitam, hic & incorruptelam circumdat plasmati suo. *Fleuardenius's Note here, as quoted in Dr. Græbe's Edition of this Father, is this: Ex miraculis super cæcorum, aridorum, aliorumque infirmorum corporibus a Domino factis, concludit ea Deo curæ esse, ac proinde olim resurrectionis.*

† Etsi attestabantur miracula. Non defuissent (sicut & nunc mustant) qui magicæ potentiz cuncta illa tribuerent,, nisi talis eorum cogitatio, contestatione prophetica vinceretur. Magicis enim artibus longe antequam nasceretur, prophetas sibi constituere a quibus prænunciaretur, nemo utique diceret.

what

what will he infer? Their Miracles can no more lessen the Authority of *Jesus Christ*, than those of the *Egyptian Sorcerers and Magicians*, if they were real ones, could lessen the Authority of *Moses*. And *Anti-Christ*, according to *St. Paul*, will do them to the Deception of Mankind, but not of all Mankind, but only them that perish, because they receive not the Love of the Truth, and believe not the Truth, but have Pleasure in Unrighteousness. * There's certainly a great deal of Difference between such a Deception as Men cannot possibly, by the Exercise of Reason, fortify themselves against, and such as they give way to in a voluntary and guilty Manner: Between such a Deception as overcomes the sincere and upright Servants of God, and such as prevails upon those who will not receive the Love of the Truth, but take Pleasure in Unrighteousness. He tells us, the Fathers say that *Anti-Christ* will equal *Jesus* in all his Miracles, which he wrought of old. If they do, I shall hardly for my part believe it: But where do they say so? He mentions but one Place. I could not readily find *St. Austin de Anti-Christo*, which he produces in confirmation of his Assertion: But *St. Austin* has a Discourse upon the Manifestation of *Anti-Christ*, with Reference to the Passage of *St. Paul* to the *Thessalonians*, which I just mentioned; where he says, 'twas doubted whether they were called Signs and lying Wonders, because he was to deceive our mortal Senses by Phantasms or Appearances, that he might seem to do what he really did not; or because those Things, though they were real Prodigies, might reduce Persons to a Falsehood; believing those Things could not be done but by the Power of God; being ignorant of the Power of the Devil; especially when he should receive such a Power he never had before. †

I think our Author should have been very clear, particular, and full, in producing the Evidence for

* *Thessalonians* Ch. ii. Ver. 10, 12.

† *Vid. Aug. de Civit. Dei* L. 20. cap. 19.

those workers of Miracles he mentions, and fairly prove them to be real Miracles: The Persons themselves must also appear to be plainly foretold by the Prophets, according to his own Opinion; since, according to him, Prophecy is the only way in this Case. Their Miracles should be confirmed by Doctrines the most agreeable to the Nature and Perfections of God: Nay, they must withal assume to themselves the Title and Character of Prophets; without every one of which, the Case is not parallel to that of *Jesus*.

He represents the Writers against the *Grounds*, &c. endeavouring to prove the *Messiahship* of *Jesus* from Miracles, in Contradistinction to Impostors and false Prophets, by two Heads of Argument; One is, that besides Greatness of Power, there was nothing but Goodness, Kindness and Love to Mankind shewn in *Jesus's* Miracles. He tells us, in Answer, the Fathers say, that *Jesus*, if his Miracles are to be understood in the literal Sense, did not only as foolish Things as any Impostor could do, but very injurious ones to Mankind. But the Fathers, however they allegorize them, all understand them, I presume to say, in the literal Sense; and he himself neither has prov'd, nor can prove the Contrary: And without this he misses all his Aim.

He next represents them as urging, *Isa. xxxv. 5, 6.* but his Answer to this has no great Strength in it; the Accomplishment of Prophecies, that can neither be given forth by human foresight, nor fulfilled in a counterfeit, are good Proofs of *Jesus's* Messiahship. Very well, the Description and Character given of *Jesus Christ* at so great a Distance of Time before his Appearance in the World, could not be given forth by human Foresight; for it is impossible that by human Foresight, we should certainly know the Circumstances, Character, and Conduct of any Person yet unborn, and especially of one that is not to live in the World till after a long Series of Time; according to *St. Austin*, as

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quoted.

quoted p. 15. His only way therefore, here, was roundly to deny the Prophecy it self: But instead of being generous enough to do that, he pretends the only way to prove *Jesus's Messiahship*, is from the Allegorical Interpretation of the Law and the Prophets; and he accordingly allegorizes this Prophecy: And therefore I see no Reason, at present, to undertake the Vindication of its being Authentick. Nor could the Prophecies relating to *Jesus* be suppos'd to be *fulfilled in a Counterfeit*; some of the Prophecies refer to the Time, Place, and other Circumstances of his Nativity and Life: These, I hope, could not be fulfilled in a Counterfeit; and as little could those relating to his Miracles be so, which were done, several of them, before great Crouds and Multitudes of People; and also in the Presence, and under the Observation of his bitterest Enemies; which, if any Thing can be Security in such a Case, are the best we can have or desire against Counterfeit and Imposture. As under the foregoing Branch, he should have denied the Prophecies; so under this, he should have denied the History of *Jesus*. But Facts are stubborn Things, that let People twist and trifle as they please, will not yield to the capricious Fancies or cajoling Humour of every Disputant. One Demonstration clearly made out, or one matter of Fact fairly and fully attested, are worth an hundred specious Hypotheses, and the most subtile Arguings upon them. Nay, the Fathers he is so fond of, by their concurring Suffrages, give Evidence plain, and strong enough, both for the Reality of those Prophecies, and the literal Accomplishment of them: And it will be time enough to answer the rest of his Disputation, when he shall have fairly overthrown this.

He pretends in the second Place, that the aforesaid Prophecies, and others mentioned in *Isaiah*, neither were, nor could be, Prophecies of the Miraculous Cures of Bodily Diseases, because part of the Prophecies received then no Accomplishment; whereas
Jesus

Jesus ought to have fulfilled one Part as well as the other. But who told this Writer that Prophecy fix'd the same Date for the fulfilment of all its Particulars? And if Jesus fulfils the several Prophecies in their respective Seasons, his Argument here falls to the Ground. But how could he say the Fathers *adjourn the Accomplishment of those Prophecies to Christ's spiritual Advent?* If he means that, allowing the literal Sense and Accomplishment, they allegorize them as the Patterns and Types of his Spiritual Operations, I shall not pretend to contradict him: But then it's nothing to his Argument. But if he means that they denied the Accomplishment of them in the literal Sense, I must beg the Favour of him to prove it. And agreeable to this is his own next Quotation from *Origen*, who does not deny the literal Sense of our Saviour's Miracles, but only affirms his fulfilment of them in the spiritual Sense as well as the other *.

We are now come to his second general Head, Wherein he will prove, *that the literal Story of many of Jesus's Miracles, as they are recorded in the Evangelists, and commonly believed by Christians, does imply Improbabilities, and Incredibilities, and the grossest Absurdities, very dishonourable to the Name of Christ; consequently they, in whole or in part, were never wrought, but are only related as prophetic and parabolical Narratives of what would be mysteriously and more wonderfully done by him.*

He thinks the reading of this Head will strike with Horror some of our squeamish Divines. I can safely say, for my Part, it struck me with no Horror at all; and so this Frump does not happen to reach me. And because I would go as far along with him as I can, I am almost ready to allow they must be very squeamish, ay, and timorous Divines indeed,

* Interim completur & *Isaia* prophetia non tantum in *Corporalibus*, verum etiam in *Spiritualibus*. p. 17.

who are struck with Horror, because any Gentleman takes a Fancy to divert himself with his own Peculiarities, let them be never so much out of the way, or hard to be prov'd. I grant, indeed, 'tis *squeamishness* with a Witness, and, if he pleases, somewhat worse, not to embrace Truth when it is laid before us; but if a Proposition is advanc'd without any proper Foundation and Evidence, though the Falshood and Absurdity of it may be very nauseous to a rational Mind; yet I can hardly think that those who talk in such a Way of Weakness and Fallacy, have it in their Power to strike Men of Sense with Horror. But our Author, we see, has that Opinion of himself, that he thinks he can make a very terrible Impression upon the Minds of some Men. Well, let him delight himself with this entertaining Conceit, and go on to imagine himself as formidable as he pleases.

Before he enters upon the Examination of our Saviour's Miracles, he will premise two or three general Assertions of the Fathers about them. One of his Quotations I could not readily find; and seeing how little the others were to his Purpose, did not give my self much Trouble about it. *Origen* indeed has the Passage he refers to; and he does speak plain enough, *that there are some Places in the Scriptures that cannot be literally true.* He thinks it *absurd according to the Letter, that our Saviour should command his Apostles to salute no Man by the Way: That whosoever smites us on the right Cheek, we should turn to him the other also.* Whereas, says he, *whosoever smites with his right Hand, will of course smite the left Cheek;* and many other such Fancies he has. But what, I beseech this Writer, are these to our Saviour's Miracles? He gives a particular Caution as to them. *

* Ne quis autem suspicetur nos hoc docere, quia — ea quæ de Salvatore scripta sunt, non putare [*putamus*] etiam sensibilibus impleta, vel
St.

St. Hilary does not, in that Place our Author quotes, say a Word about our Saviour's Miracles; but is only pleading for the spiritual Understanding of the Discourse between *Christ* and his Disciples about the young Man in the *Gospel* *.

Our Author now undertakes to shew that the *Story of many of Jesus's Miracles is literally absurd, improbable and incredible.*

And first he will *Speak to that Miracle of Jesus's driving the Buyers and Sellers out of the Temple.* In answer to which I would observe, that as our Mediator had, by the Father's Gift, an universal Dominion over the Creatures; so it can be no wonder at all that he should, upon what Occasions he pleas'd, give evident and glorious Displays of it. Our Author says if this was *literally true*, Jesus *must appear more than a Man*. No doubt of it; or else, according to his own Way of Reasoning, upon another Occasion, *there's an End of the Miracle* †. The two Suppositions he makes, I think, are not much amiss; that he might either *put on an awful and most majestic Countenance to effect it*; or, *by his divine Power, infuse a pannaic Fear into the People*: The latter of which is not hard to suppose, where Men are accused of a known Corruption, and Violation of the Law of God. If it were not that I don't love to be ludicrous upon such a Subject, I might ask him, Whether he himself pretends to be more than a meer Man? And yet he has the Vanity and Presumption to think he can strike some of our *Divines with Horrour*: And since he supposes, in a very unmannerly Strain, the Buyers and Sellers in the Temple to be such sort of Men, I hope *Jesus Christ* might as well *strike them with Horrour*, and infuse an effectual Dread

præcepta ejus secundum *literam* non debere servari. Respondendum ergo est, quoniam a nobis evidenter decernitur, in quam plurimis servari & posse & oportere *historia veritatem*.

* Matt. xix. 22, &c.

† P. 53.

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into their Hearts. He seems with a Scoff to ask the Reason, *Why he was so eaten up with Zeal against the Prophanation of that House, which he himself came to destroy, and which he permitted, and commanded to be filthily polluted not long after?* It's strange he can't distinguish better between Things. 'Twas God's Institution, Presence and Favour, that gave the Temple all its Glory: 'Twas this that made it an House of Prayer; and thus it continued to be, till the Institution was vacated and repeal'd; and till then, 'twas highly congruous for the *Messiah* to exert himself in Vindication of the Honour of God, and the Reverence of that Temple, which was built, consecrated, accepted, and bless'd for his Service. Tho' when the Iniquities of the *Jews* were full, by divine Vengeance they were some time after depriv'd of this their Glory and its concomitant Blessings. He pretends *Origen* makes the whole BUT a Parable: But if he will please, once more, to look out his own Quotation, he will find himself convicted of a very great Falshood. For *Origen's* Testimony is full against him *. He pretends that *Origen* is so far from believing any Thing of the Letter of this Story, that he has form'd a large Argument against it. But, if he will quote the Fathers, he should do it fairly †.

Origen, a little after his Quotation, goes on (as our Author's Phrase is) to form a large Argument in Favour of the Miracle, which contains an Answer to all that this Writer produces from him against it. But the Fathers may be made to say any Thing by such Management as his; and tho' he pretends to produce

* Tunc fecit visibiliter, quod semper invisibiliter agit, ejiciens vendentes & ementes de templo.

† Immediately after our Author's twenty sixth Quotation *Origen* adds these Words. At verò unum relinquitur defensionis suffugium contra hæc; volenti etiam historiam servare. Vis quædam *Jesu* divini-
 or, qui poterat, cum vellet, inflammatum inimicorum animum extinguere; & multa hominum millia superare gratiâ divinâ, & cogitationes tumultuantium dissipare.

their concurring Testimony and Opinion against the literal Story of our Saviour's Miracles, yet he has been very unhappy in the Choice of his Quotations. Thus for Instance, he brings in St. *Hilary**, as saying, *there was no such Market kept in the Temple of Jerusalem.* And he seems to agree with him, that it would be foolish to believe that Oxen, Sheep, and Goats were there sold. And yet † he brings in St. *Austin*, as supposing there was such a Market, and saying, *Where could be the great Sin of buying and selling Things in the Temple that were for the Use of it, and offered as Sacrifice in it?* The Truth of the matter is this: The place of this Traffick was not in the inward Part of the Temple it's self, but in the Court of the *Gentiles*; and here the *Gentiles* of all Nations, who were only such Profelytes as observ'd the seven Precepts of *Noah*, were admitted to Worship. From whence it is our Saviour vindicates his Action from that Passage of the Prophet, *My House shall be called a House of Prayer for all People.* The *Jews*, as Mr. *Jos. Mede* thinks, might possibly, out of their great Contempt and Disdain of the *Gentiles*, thus pollute the Place of their Worship: But it was appointed for the Worship and Prayer of People of all Nations; and therefore our Saviour would suffer no such Practices in it. He quotes St. *Theophylact* too upon the matter; but he also is plain enough for the literal Sense, as may be seen by his Introduction to that Discourse, from whence our Author has borrow'd his Citation §. He speaks of *Erasmus*, as being of the same Mind with the Fathers: If he means about the literal Story of *Jesus's* Miracles, I don't much question it; because the Fathers themselves believed it. And if *Erasmus* thought fit to allegorize this

* p. 24.

† p. 26.

§ Ἀναλθῶν δὲ εἰς Ἱερσόλυμα ποιεῖ πρᾶγμα πολλῆς ἀνετηρίας γέμον.

Miracle of our Saviour, yet that, I hope, will not prove he disbelieved the literal Sense.

Our Author sure, could hardly be in earnest, when he makes his Criticism upon the Passage of St. *Matthew*, where he relates this Miracle. St. *Matthew's* Words are καὶ ἐξέβαλε πάντας πολλύντας καὶ ἀγοράζοντας. He thinks our *Latin* and *English* Translations of this Place err in a main Point; and therefore he's for correcting them. Instead, says he, of reading, and Jesus cast out them that sold and bought, it should be those who sold and preach'd, i. e. sold what they preach'd. But why is he so partial as to find Fault with only the *Latin* and *English* Translations, and not take Notice that other Translations err as much in a main Point as these? I have examined the *French* * and *Low Dutch* † Translations, and they interpret the Words in the same Way; and indeed, I very much question, whether he can produce any one Translator, either Antient or Modern, besides himself, that puts this Sense upon the Participle ἀγοράζοντας §. It must be a very forced Exposition indeed in a Translation, which destroys the Relation th t two such Words as πολλύντας and ἀγοράζοντας plainly have to each other: He says it's hard to conceive how applicable the Word κολλυβισων was to any Merchants of the old Temple at *Jerusalem*; But where's the Hardship of it? Our Translators have, I think, very aptly expressed the Word by Money-changers, whose Business it was to exchange Gold and Silver into inferior Value, for the more easy Distribution of it, in ex-

* Ensuite Jesus entra dans le Temple de Dieu, il en chassa tous ceux qui y vendoient & qui y achetoient, &c.

† Ende Jesus gingh in den Tempel Godts, ende dreef uyt alle die verkochten ende kochten in den Tempel, ende keerde om de tafe'en des Wisselaers, ende de sitstoelen der gene die de duyven verkochten.

§ ἀγοράζω, consulto delibero proprie de deliberationibus quæ fiunt ἐν τῇ ἀγορᾷ Item emorcor. Vid. Scap. in verbum.

pences for the Sacrifices, or other Occasions*: And it seems also probable, that by these Men a Correspondence in the way of Trade, and the Returns of Money was carried on between distant Parts of *Judea*; and yet our Saviour might very justly resent the bringing in of such Traffick or Merchandize into the Temple, or any Part of it. Thus he admonishes them, not to make his *Father's House* an *House of Merchandize*, † especially as he himself, by the expression of their making it a *Den of Thieves*, seems to intimate they were guilty of very dishonest Gain, and using great Extortion. And I can tell him of one much inferior to our Saviour, who used an Authority much like this, § and his Conduct, I hope, I may be allowed to take in the literal Sense, 'till our Author has obliged the World with his Allegories upon it; having no Talent my self at such a curious and delicate way of Thinking as this. And indeed, as our Author proves so very unsuccessful in this way of Writing himself, there's no great Encouragement for any Man to endeavour an Imitation of him. The Method he has taken seems to be contrary to his Design. His Design was to deride the *Clergy*; but then sure, his proper way would have been, not to rack and torture those *Greek Words* he has used, and at the Rate he has done, which allegorically taken in his Way, turns the Market into a Church, and the Money-changers into the Clergy; but he should have taken the *Greek Words* that signify Churches, Ecclesiastical Persons, Pulpits, Preaching, &c. and prov'd that they properly mean nothing but Markets and Shambles, Money-changers and Chapmen. He next hints that *τραπεζας*, which is translated *Tables*,

* ΚΟΛΛΟΥΒΙΣΤΗΣ dicitur ὁ τραπεζῆτης nummularius, hoc, est qui argenteos, aureosve nummos permutat minutiis & Κερμασιν quales oboli sunt & teruncii. Vid. Steph. Thesau.

Vid. etiam Suiceri Thesaurum in verbum.

† ὁ ἰσὺς ἐμποιεῖ John ii. 16.

§ Nehemiah Ch. xiii.

does properly signify *Pulpits*. I confess it's a Grief to me to have Occasion to expose so shameful a Quotation. The Author he refers to, says this Word properly signifies the Tables of Money-changers (where their Monies were told over, and from whence they have a particular Name given them) and, according to Aristophanes, by this Name is called a Pulpit or open Place, where Slaves were exposed to the Eyes of all in order for Sale*.

This Author will observe, that I principally insist upon what has some Appearance of Argument in his Performance; nor do I think my self much concern'd with what he says in a Way of Prejudice against the Clergy: They seem indeed to be very much out of his Favour; tho', if his mighty Indignation against them had been temper'd with real Wit and a little better Reason, it had been more satisfactory to himself, as well as more poignant upon them. But there's not a Grain of Wit or Argument in his talking, that they vend their brazen-fac'd Bulls and Blunders at an extravagant and great Price, whatever want of Civility and Decency there may be in it. I believe the Gentlemen will be able enough to stand such impotent Efforts as these made against them.

Upon the whole, we may now observe how this Gentleman has acquitted himself, and made good his Point. He was to prove, according to the second General, which he is upon, that the literal Story of this and other Miracles, does imply Improbabilities and Incredibilities, and the grossest Absurdities, very dishonourable to the Name of Christ. A very heavy and thundering Charge indeed! To make this, or any Part of it good, his Objection, I conceive, must lie, either

* Interdum sic quasi Κατ ἐξοχὴν, nominatur mensa argentariorum, seu nummulariorum, ut apud Demosthen. ἐπὶ τὴν τετραζάν ἐθνηκαν ἐπὶ δὲ μνᾶς. apud Aristophanem sic vocatur Pulpitum, aut locus editor, in quo vernæ & mancipia omnium oculis venum exponebantur. Vid. Scapulam.

against the Power, or Will of Christ. As to the former, there is nothing mentioned in the Account of the Miracle, but what surely was possible to so divine and glorious a Person: And neither he nor any Man can deny, but that it's supposable, a Person may be sent upon this Earth, clothed with a divine Authority, and furnish'd with a real extraordinary Power, such as cannot be resolved into Magick Art (unless he is for resolving all the Works of Omnipotence into Magick Art.) And that there really was such a Person who wrought this Miracle, I appeal to the Records, that are extant; the proper Way to obtain Evidence of matters of Fact, brought to pass at so great a Distance from our own Times. Nor can I think any substantial Reason can be assigned why, supposing Christ furnish'd with a divine Power (as the Mediator certainly was) it should be disagreeable to his Will to give this particular Instance and Display of it. What was there in the Act contrary to one single Perfection of the Deity? Unless the Distribution of Justice, in a most necessary and deserved Punishment, for a flagrant and growing Enormity, may be called so. Let him shew then, if he can, that it's *improbable, incredible, absurd, or dishonourable to Christ*, to vindicate the Honour of that Temple, which was, in a most sacred and appropriate Sense, his Father's House, and which the *Jews* had wickedly profaned: Let him shew that a Crime of this Nature was beneath his Resentment, or unbecoming the Indignation of a Redeemer, who *came to fulfil the Law and the Prophets*. Or that scourging (a Punishment, which is usually most inflicted upon the meanest Offenders, in order to make them appear infamous in the Eyes of the World) was not a proper Expression of his great Contempt and Abomination of them.

I now go on to a *second Miracle* our Author treats of, and that is, *his casting the Devils out of the Mad-men, and permitting them to enter into the Herd of Swine,*

*which thereupon ran down a Precipice, and were all choak'd in the Sea **

Since this Gentleman seems very eager to lay hold of every Thing to expose the literal Story of our Saviour's Miracles, it's a little to be wondered at, that he should not chuse to embellish his Representation of this Miracle, in the same Manner as he did that of the Former: And the rather, because one of his first Observations there, would, I promise him, make a much better Figure here. But since he has neglected it, it can sure be no Offence, and he may possibly take it kindly, if I illustrate it my self from his own Words, with a very little, and but necessary Variation of his Language. Why should he not then here have said, † *It's hard to conceive, how any one in the Form of a Man, and of a despised one too, (and we don't read that Jesus chang'd his human Shape) ay and without a Whip in his Hand too, could execute such a Work upon, not a great Multitude of People, but a whole Legion of Devils, who I suppose, were none of his Disciples, nor had any Regard for him. How curious and a-Propos would such a Thought have been here! But let us hear how he himself speaks to the Matter: He says then, Be the Miracle as great as can be imagin'd, it's no more than what false Teachers, workers of Iniquity, and even some Artists among the Jews have before done; consequently, such a Work of Exorcism in our Saviour, could be no Proof of his divine Authority §. 'Tis then however granted, that there has been such a Thing as dispossessing Men of evil Spirits: And if those Exorcists he mentions, might be supposed to equal, yet I hope, not to exceed our Saviour in any Instance of Power. He says, If there was no more to be said against this Miracle, this is enough to set it aside, and to spoil the Argument of Jesus's divine Power from it.*

* p. 31.

† p. 22.

§ p. 31.

But I need not tire the Reader by giving a long Answer to this, having already spoken somewhat to it * and refer'd him to Mr. Chandler, who treats at large of this Matter, in his excellent Discourse upon *Miracles*; to whom I will now add another Writer †. He asks, *How came those Madmen to have their Dwelling amongst the Tombs of a burying Ground?* Oh dear! Yes certainly: 'Twas highly proper they should be so near their Graves; for in two or three Lines farther, he is for sending them into 'em. If their Case was so bad, he very gravely argues, 'twas possible surely, as well as lawful, to dispatch them. But it was usual for those Spirits to abide in Tombs, to confirm in Men that vain Persuasion of the Souls of Men, after Death, being turn'd into *Dæmons*, and for divers other Ends, for which the Solitude of such Places was very advantageous to them: None using to come thither but to bury their Dead §. But he thinks it was lawful to dispatch them: In answer to this, they seem to be in Scripture represented as very proper Objects of Compassion; and I think we do not read of any Instance of Severity the People used towards them, but they rather seem'd very affectionately to pity them in that dreadful Condition, were very solicitous for their Recovery, and for that End, were importunate with Christ to commiserate and help them; and this is the more reasonable to suppose, not only from Humanity in general, but also from, I think, the constant Silence of Scripture, as to any particular Complaints made of the *Dæmoniacks*: They are never, as I remember, represented as having been vicious in their Character, nor mischievous to any but themselves. I cannot recollect more than one Instance, that looks like an Exception to this, which is *Acts* xix. 16. but th^{at} was a special Case, wherein God righteously

* Vide p. 10, and 17.
the Hebrews, Ch. ii. Ver. 4.

† See Peirce's *Paraphrase and Notes on*
§ See Dr. Hammond.

suffered

suffered them to defeat and over-power a parcel of such dexterous *Juglers* and *Artists* as those, whose Skill and Management our Author so highly extols.

Our Author adds, *But what is worse, it is not credible there was any Herd of Swine in that Country.* But that there were Swine among the *Gadarenes*, contrary to the *Jewish* Custom, will not appear strange, when it is remember'd, that *Gadara*, which was in the eastern Extremities of the Land of *Canaan*, is by *Josephus* number'd amongst the *ἑλληνίδες πόλεις*, i. e. *Grecian Cities*, which *Pompey* took away from the *Jews**. And the greatest Part of the Inhabitants were *Syrians*, not *Jews*, according to *Josephus* †. To give an Answer in brief to the whole: The *Messiah* undoubtedly was invested, as Mediator, with a full Dominion over all Creatures upon Earth. He had Power, even upon Earth, to forgive Sins. An Act of such Royalty; Greatness and Authority, as hardly leaves Room to suppose that he could be unfurnish'd with any sort of Power upon Earth. And the Effects he produced, were sufficient Arguments of that Power, by which they were accomplish'd. And the Apprehensions and Expectations of the *Jews* were consentaneous to this: *When that Christ cometh, will he do more Miracles than this Man hath done?* § Nay, 'tis sufficiently known, that the whole Body of the *Jews* were possess'd with a very lofty and magnificent Opinion of their expected *Messiah*, and the Grandeur and Authority, in which he should appear. The only Difficulty that remains is, that any Injury should befall the Proprietors of the Swine. Now this, I think, carries no great Strength in it; for, if it be granted, as it is by our Author, Pag. 12. that he had actually this Power to produce such Effects, it is very rational to suppose that God, in such a

* Vide Casaubon. ad Baron. p. 219.

† Vid. Dr. Hammond, in Loc.

§ Joh. vii. 31.

Case, would invest no Person with this Power, but one imploy'd in the Interest of Truth, and whose Undertaking he approv'd: If God then authoriz'd our Saviour to be a Prophet and worker of Miracles, the Act of our Saviour becomes his (God's) own Act. It can't, I think, be pleaded from hence, that false Prophets have the Seal of the divine Authority to their Commission; because it seems not reasonable to suppose, that God would communicate any Powers to them, inconsistent to, and incompatible with the Cause and Interest of Truth; or if he suffers them to exert uncommon Powers, he will always take Care there shall be Circumstances sufficient to distinguish such a false Pretender, from one whom he really approves. If then, the Act may be supposed to be the Act of God, there can be no room to complain of Injury, its in his Power, whenever he pleases, to put a Period to my Life, or to the Life of any, in whom my Happiness and Comfort is most bound up: And if I am not to dispute against his Procedures in this Case, much less, if he only diminishes my Substance, or destroys my Cattle. *Job's* Loss was vastly greater than this; (supposing, at present, that Book only to pass for common History) and yet that good Man was far from impeaching the Severity of Providence, even before he knew of, or expected, a return of Future, nay double Prosperity. For my Part, I make no manner of doubt, but that there was a most wise and good Design that *Jesus* had, in suffering those Devils to enter into the Swine, whatever Handle some Men think they may take from hence, for scoffing and raillery. And if we cannot distinctly determine what that Design was, yet it's very rash, upon that single Account, to cashier and condemn the Miracle it's self. I shall sum up all in the Words of a very great Man: *Whether our Saviour permitted this, to shew the very great Power of evil Spirits, and how terrible the Effects of their Malice would be upon Men, if they were not restrained by God; or whether*

Or whether 'twas to punish the Gergesens for keeping those Beasts, which were a Snare and Offence to the Jews, their Flesh not being permitted to be eaten; or for whatever other wise Reason it was: Certain it is, that this is the only Miracle our Saviour wrought, whereby any Man suffered Damage*. Whether the Gadarenes desiring his Departure out of their Coasts, proceeded from an unreasonable Timorousness and Dread, that he who had shewn such marvellous Effects of his Power upon the Swine, might do more tremendous Things amongst them; or whether that Request flow'd from Ingratitude and the want of a due Sense of his Goodness; or their valuing the Lives of the Swine more than of the two Men dispossessed, I am not at all concerned to answer either Way. I pass over his Allegories from the Fathers.

This Gentleman is pleas'd to divert himself with a Supposition of what would have been the Consequence, if these two foregoing Miracles had been brought in accusation against Jesus, before Pilate † putting this Question to the Jews, *What Evil has he done?* And upon summing up the Evidence, asking the Opinion of the Jews, saying, *What think you?* But he has himself answer'd as to the last Miracle; for how could the Jews be supposed to desire his Condemnation for destroying Swine? For, as he learnedly tells us, § they were forbidden to eat Swines Flesh; what then should they do with Swine, (which are good for nothing, till dead) who eat neither Pig, Pork, nor Bacon? And if the Gadarenes had had Malice enough to appear against him, or any other to prosecute their Charge in their Room, even our Author himself, if he pleases, with all his Eloquence, I make no doubt, but our Saviour could have made a most full and ample Defence. As to the former Miracle, Pilate, who was a Heathen, really was not concern'd

* Vid. Dr. Clark's Paraphrase on Mat. viii. 32. † p. 38. § p. 32. about

about their Temple Affairs; and if they had offer'd to trouble him with such kind of Charges against *Jesus*, who was for reducing the *Jews* to the Worship of God, according to their own Law, it is not unlikely, that he might have repuls'd their Impertinence and Malice in the same Manner as *Gallio* did *, who after a just Rebuke for their quarrelsome Temper, drove them from the Judgment Seat. No, the *Jews* had a little more Wit in their Anger than our Author imagines: They knew well enough, 'twas the readiest Way to accomplish their Design, to accuse him before an heathen Magistrate of the highest Crimes against *Cesar*; and therefore prudently enough took care, for their own Sakes, not to bring such idle Charges against him; so that however zealous they were as to Matters relating to their own Method of Religion or Temple, yet they mentioned their Complaint against *Jesus*, upon these Accounts, only to *Caiaphas* the high Priest of the *Jews* †. But when they came before *Pilate*, they altogether insisted upon Charges of a Civil Nature.

We may now at length ask, where was the *Incredibility* of this Miracle? Or, what was there *absurd* or *dishonourable* to the Name of *Christ* in it? If there was any such Thing as Possession by evil or unclean Spirits, (which our Author seems to take for granted; or if he did not, will not find it very easy to disprove it) I hope 'twas no Ways *improbable* nor *dishonourable*, that our blessed Saviour should exert the glorious Power he was endued with, in a Case of such extraordinary Necessity, not only in Compassion to the poor distressed Objects; but also to display the Triumphs of his Authority over the Powers of Darkness. And if we can't specify the particular Reason of his permitting the Destruction of the Swine, who had an entire Dominion, not only over them, but their Owners too; yet this will not be

* Acts xviii. 14, 15, 16.

† Mat. xxvi. 61. &c. Mark xiv. 53. &c.

sufficient to overthrow the Miracle, nor will it be any just Occasion to complain that it was an Act dishonourable to Christ. And since it is possible there might have been a very good Design in it, it would better become one that pretends to consult his Honour, to suppose there really was such an one. Where then can there be at last any such *mighty Absurdity* in this Story, when the Parts of it are fairly laid together? It pleased God at that Time, to permit evil Spirits to have an extraordinary Influence upon the Bodies of some Men, whereby they were brought into a most deplorable Condition, and were made terrible Spectacles to those about them. The Influence of those powerful Spirits was so great and violent upon those miserable Creatures, that no Strength or Contrivance of their Friends was sufficient to confine them, and so they forsook all Places of Company and Resort, and retired to those that were solitary and unfrequented, *abiding in no Houses, but had their Dwelling among the Tombs*; and were always Night and Day in the Mountains and Tombs. Jesus immediately dispossessed them, and permitted them to exercise their Rage upon a parcel of Animals, that were an Abomination to the Jews; to convince the Inhabitants, not only of his own Dominion over all Creatures, and transcendent Power; but also of the Misery of being subject to those evil Spirits.

Our Author goes on to a third Miracle of Jesus, and that is, his Transfiguration on the Mount; this, he says, is the *darkest and blindest Story of the whole Gospel*. This is one of his little Turns of Wit. Because 'tis about our Saviour's Transfiguration, and the extraordinary Splendor, that then appeared; therefore, by Way of Contradiction and Banter, it must be *the darkest and blindest Story of the whole*

Gospel! He owns we must not say there is nothing in the Letter of this Story, because St. Peter says he was an *Eye-Witness* of Jesus's Majesty, saw his Glory on the Mount, and heard the Voice out of the Cloud; and yet he thinks that Infidels would easily distress us with Difficulties and Objections to the Letter of it. And how will they do it? Why, forsooth, by forming their Exceptions to the Credibility or Probability of this or that Part of it! And what matter of Fact, brought to pass at such a Distance of Time from ours, is not capable of being thus wonderfully distressed with such sort of Improbabilities, as this Writer musters up against our Saviour's Miracles? He seems, by this Way of speaking, to grant they can form no Exceptions to the Possibility of it; nor indeed is it possible they should: And the Testimony of one Witness, of allowed Capacity and Integrity, by the Evidence of two Senses, is sufficient to overthrow the little Quirks of ten Thousand Cavilers. And there seems to me, a much greater Probability in the literal, than the allegorical Sense, that our Author has forc'd upon it.

He has most grossly perverted St. *Austin* again; who, as he pretends, owns that the whole of it might be performed by *Magick Art*. It's really tiresome to fill up Page after Page with exposing the disingenuous Practices of a Man who pretends to understand the Fathers; and not only sets up himself for a Writer in Controversy, but undertakes to dictate to others, and calls upon the Clergy to appear like Men and Scholars from the Press against his Discourse. St. *Austin* is commenting upon 2 Pet. i. 18, 19. upon which he says, *Why is Prophecy a surer Word than the Voice from Heaven?* He answers, because there are Infidels, who derogate so much from Christ, as to pretend that what he did was by *Magick Art*. Infidels indeed might, by human Conjectures and unwarrantable Curiosity, account for the Voice from Heaven according to *Magick Art*: But the Prophets were before not only that Voice,

but even *Christ's Incarnation*. *Christ was not yet a Man when he sent the Prophets*. But suppose, says he, any one say he was a Magician, to which he gives this Answer, supposing (tho' far from granting the Truth of the Objection) he might, by *Magick Art*, have procured himself to be worshipped even when dead; yet was it possible he could be a Magician before he was born? Observe therefore, upon what Reason Peter says we have a more sure Word of Prophecy; the Voice from Heaven for the Admonition of Believers, and Prophecy for the Conviction of Infidels*. Strange indeed, that St. *Austin* should be drag'd in as owning it might be performed by *Magick Art*, where he is discoursing professedly and earnestly against such an Imputation! Our Author insinuates as if the Voice from Heaven might be accounted for from the Methods some Juglers and strange Artists use in the Imitation of a Voice, who can make it as if it came from afar off, when 'tis uttered close by us: But the next time he meets with any of these Artists, let him join his own Dexterity with theirs, and let them try in Consort, if they can, by any possible Imitation, feign a Voice from Heaven to the Satisfaction of three different Persons. And he says they can cast themselves too into different Forms and Shapes without a Miracle. I suppose he hardly means that they can Metamorphose themselves, according to his Use of the Word, into the Forms, Shapes and Essences of Creatures and Things of a quite different Species, Size and Figure: And if he only talks of our common Posture-Masters, he says nothing to the Purpose;

* Quid est ergo certior? — Quoniam sunt homines infideles, qui sic detrahunt Christo, ut dicant eum magicis artibus fecisse, quæ fecit. Possent ergo infideles etiam istam vocem delatam de cælo, per conjecturas humanas & illicitas curiositates ad magicas Artes referre. Sed Prophetæ ante fuerunt; non dico ante istam vocem, sed ante Christi carnem. Nondum erat homo Christus, quando misit Prophetas. Quisquis eum dicit magum fuisse: Si ergo magicis artibus fecit ut coleretur & mortuus, nunquid magus erat, antequam natus? &c. in *serm.* 43. *sect.* 5. Compare also the Quotation from St. *Austin*, p. 15.

If he means they can cast themselves into some odd Forms, but cannot counterfeit such Appearances as were supposed to be at the Transfiguration, he does not reach the Case: If he means that they can even do that too, let him and the Artists, he mentions, try that together also. He pretends the Original Word *μεταμορφωθῆναι* signifies nothing less than the Change or Transformation of a Person into the Forms, Shapes and Essences of Creatures and Things of a quite different Species, Size and Figure: But the Word is also used to signify a Change into different Similitudes and Appearances, without the Change of Essences and Shapes; as for a Man to be chang'd into a Prophet *.

He asks, *What was the particular Reason and Use of this Miracle?* † No doubt, to afford his Disciples a Discovery of the transcendent Dignity of his Person, and some Representation of his future Glory, of which there was soon to be another illustrious Manifestation in his powerful Resurrection from the Dead. *They were made Eye-Witnesses of his Majesty, and heard that solemn Voice, which came to him from Heaven, whereby he received from God the Father, Honour and Glory, proclaiming him his beloved Son, in whom he was well pleased* §. 'Twas a singular Instance of his great Favour and Kindness to these three Disciples, whom he indulg'd so far, as to admit their Presence and Attendance upon him in several Passages of his most private Life; it had a good Tendency to fortify them against that approaching Hour of Darkness and Horror, that was to be spent in the most bitter Agonies; at which they alone were present with him in the Garden: And also the better to prepare them to bear that great Weight of Service and Sufferings, which, as his extraordinary Ministers, they were to undergo. It must be a strong Confirmation of their Regard to their blessed Lord, and a great Encou-

* Vid. Steph. Thes. in Verb.

† P. 42.

§ 2 Pet. i. 16, 17, 18.
ragement

agement to Faithfulness under their sharpest Trials, to see him array'd in this divine Splendor, and thus visibly, thus triumphantly authoriz'd and approved by the Father. He insists upon it, that there should have been more Witnesses, and particularly that the *unbelieving Multitude* should have had a Sight and hearing of this Miracle, as well as the Apostles. But where was the Obligation? Was our Saviour obliged to expose all the Passages of his private Life, however glorious, to the View of all Mankind? And where was the Necessity? Surely it was sufficient, if the rest of Mankind, who attended him, had Evidences proper and full laid before them for their Conviction; such as a rational Enquirer could not fairly resist. And as for those that remained Unbelievers, they had certainly the least Pretence of any, to expect an Admission into his Retirements, and secret Conferences. It's contrary to the stated Methods of the divine Government, and the Rules of heavenly Wisdom, profusely to multiply Advantages upon those, who will not improve the Light and Evidence they have.

He is very inquisitive to know what *Moses* and *Elias* talk'd about: And yet here the *evangelical History* is not silent, according to his own Confession, who quotes *St. Luke*, as saying, *They discoursed of Jesus's Decease, which he should accomplish at Jerusalem.* But this, he says, is a *Barbarism*, and, he appeals to our *Greek Criticks*, an improper Expression of such a Signification. But I would fain know who those wonderful *Greek Critics* are, besides himself, that pretend to find any such Fault? The *Barbarism* he makes to lie in translating *ἐξόδον πληρῶν*, to signify the Death which Christ should accomplish. But I hope, *Cyriel* and *Theophylact* may pass for *Greek Critics* with him, and they translate the Word *ἐξόδον* thus in this very Place: * So also does *Erasmus*, *Drusius*, *Grotius*,

* Vid. *Spicer. Thesaurum in Verbum.*

and many others, whom I need not here mention. So likewise it is used 2 *Pet.* i. 15. And it is no Wonder that our Saviour's Death should be represented under a different Notion from that of others, as it was really an Accomplishment of the Prophecies, as well as of his own Promise, and most gracious Resolution to die for us. Thus he seems himself to speak of his Death, *Luke* xii. 50. and *Luke* xviii. 31:

Once more the poor Fathers are brought in to be rack'd and wrested by him as best serves his Purpose. And here we have no less than ten new Quotations from them, to help us to allegorize our Saviour's Transfiguration. But I have had too much Toil already, in examining his Quotations from the Fathers, to be very fond of tracing him any farther: I shall therefore, only take Notice of one of them, and that is his sixty fifth Quotation from St. *John* of *Jerusalem*, who takes care to preserve a due Regard to the Letter of this History, and in this very Place expressly declares himself in Favour of it: * and yet Mr. *W*— says, † from these Quotations it is plain they (the Fathers) look'd on the Story of *Christ's* Transfiguration, BUT as a Figure and Parable.

Where now is all the Absurdity of the Transfiguration? He himself clears one Objection against the first Miracle, from being an Objection against this: If 'twas hard to conceive how any one, in the Form of a Man, could drive the Buyers and Sellers out of the Temple; yet he lets us know it's not hard to conceive how any one in the Form of a Man, might be transfigured; for he very philosophically reasons upon it, that, considering the Change which is made by the Reflections of the Light of the Sun, 'twas no more than a common Case: Or however, to be accounted for from Natural Causes, without the Sup-

* Non historiam denegamus sed spirituales intelligentias præferimus.

† p. 48.

position or need of a Miracle *. Nor can he here object, as before, of any Injury done by the Transfiguration. But in short, if any thing *Jesus* did, was above the Force and Power of Natural Causes; then it's incredible on that very Account, or else it's not above the Capacity of natural Causes to Effect; and then it's no Miracle. So that every thing has either too much or too little of the Miracle in it; for a Gentleman of so nice and delicate a Taste; and therefore, I fear it's altogether impossible to please him; and that whatever *Jesus* did, or could do, it never would go down (to use an elegant Expression of his own) with so SQUEAMISH a Divine. Nay, not only *Jesus*, but any other Prophet would find as much Difficulty to satisfy a Man of his Temper: And all that he says here on the Transfiguration, might with as much Ingenuity and Justice, I assure him, have been apply'd to the Account which *Moses* gives of God's Appearance upon *Mount Sinai*. 'Tis but saying, *that the whole of it might be performed by Magick Art; and that there are some Jugglers, such strange Artists at the Imitation of a Voice, as to make it as if it came from afar off, when it is uttered close by us; and that they can cast themselves too into different Forms and Shapes, without a Miracle, to the Surprise and Admiration of Spectators:* And this must certainly be enough to baffle several Thousands of People out of their Senses, who were present at that great Solemnity. He don't pretend the first Miracle either was, or could be, done by Magic Art: No, Stripes are too sensible Things to be thus jested with. As to the second, that it seems, was an injurious one. Well, but the Transfiguration was injurious to no Body: Why then that must be accounted for by Magic Art. Something or other he is resolved to find out for an Objection, let the

Case be never so plain, and though he has not been able to find out one material or substantial Exception against any of the Miracles, yet it shall go hard with him but he will dress up some sorry Cavil against them.

He has now finish'd his Observations on those three Miracles, which he principally design'd to consider at present: But he assures us he is not *gotten to the end of his Tedder*; and which is worse, I am afraid never will. His Way of Writing seems so very entertaining to himself, that let it be never so unacceptable to the rest of Mankind, he cannot forbear; and therefore he *will*, hereafter, *take into Examination some other of Jesus's Miracles*; * and in Truth, they are all of them, for ought I know, capable of being treated in his allegorical Way as well as these. Nay I know not whether there is any History of Facts, either antient or modern, which a Gentleman of his Skill and Acuteness may not be able to allegorize at the same rate; and so with as good a Grace he may face us down we are not to believe the literal Story of any of them.

I will just touch upon the rest of the Miracles he mentions, and upon which he designs to be more *copious*. He *will take to task his Miracle of changing Water into Wine at a Marriage in Cana of Galilee* †. And though he has been all along so very ludicrous, yet here, it seems, his mercurial Humour fails him: He has diverted himself with a great many pretty Conceits of his own upon the former Miracles; yet all of a sudden he has found something in this, that is unbecoming a Gentleman of his profound Gravity forsooth! to discourse upon. This seems to be giving us some ground to hope he at last designs the World a solid and serious Discourse, or in his own Words, that he will appear *like a Man and a Scholar*.

* p. 49.

† John ii. 1. &c.

from the Press. He has such a strange Fit of Gravity upon him now, that he would not for the World be so impious or prophane, as to believe — what is contained and imply'd in the Letter of this Story. But one would think a Man of such prodigious Caution about his own Belief, for fear of Impiety and Prophaneness, should have had some Tendernefs for the Belief of others; and not have insinuated to the World, as if *Jesus* was no more than a Conjuror or Sorcerer; which if he cannot find out better Evidence to prove, than he has done, there is Reason to believe those injurious and dishonourable Reflections he has cast upon him, will cost him a very deep and bitter Repentance. But to return: He may at this time lay aside all this Demureness, and we'll allow him to be pleasant and facetious when he reads this Story: I'll answer for it, there's nothing in it to pollute his Mirth, or so much as tempt him to be prophane. He brings in here the Story of *Apollonius Tyanens*, of whom it is said, That a Table was all on a sudden, at his Command, miraculously spread with variety of nice Dishes, for the Entertainment of himself and his Guests. But one would wonder how any Man, that is such an implicit Believer of the Authority of the Fathers, and has had so much of their Acquaintance, should not have known and paid some Regard to what *Eusebius* says concerning this Person. I shall give his Account of him, as 'tis collected by an eminent Writer, * which will be most for the Benefit of English Readers: It is thus: Says he, "*Eusebius* has prov'd, That *Apollonius Tyanæus* was so far from being comparable to *Jesus Christ*, that he did not deserve to be rank'd among the Philosophers, and that *Philostatus*, who wrote his Life, is an Author unworthy of Credit, because he contradicts himself very

* Du Pin's Ecclesiastical Hist. Vol. I.

“ often; he doubts himself of those very Miracles which he relates, and he reports many Things that are plainly fabulous.”

Our Author awkwardly insinuates, as if *Jesus delighted to make his Friends thoroughly merry*, (I thought how long his Gravity would hold) *or he would not be at the Pains of a Miracle to turn so much Water into Wine, after they had before well drank.* The Word * which we translate *well drank*, we are by no means oblig'd to understand of drinking to Excess, as appears by several Instances of the Use of that Word; † besides, the having *well drank*, is not asserted of any of the Persons present at the Marriage Feast, as he fancies, but it is the Account the Ruler of the Feast gives of what was the general Custom at Festivals, viz. that at the Beginning, the best Wine was presented to the Guests, and when they had competently drank, a more ordinary Sort was used. But suppose that any of the *Guests* had afterwards made an ill Use of our Saviour's Liberality and Bounty, I hope he was by no Means responsible for that: The abuse of any Thing can never infer a Reflection upon the Donor, but only upon the ungrateful and sinful Temper of the Abuser: Or if the Gentleman denies this, he must censure and reproach the flowing Liberality of that God *who daily loads us with his Benefits.* Or to instance in a different Case: The Liberty of the Press is a Privilege, that arises from the Favour and Indulgence of our Governours, and which They have it in their Power to deprive us of, or to restrain at least. Suppose now, a Book should come out with any Prophaneness and Impiety, which our Author pretends so much to abhor: Nay, suppose they should even imagine his own Book to be liable to the Censure

* μεθύδωσι. † Vid. Dr. Whitby, in loc. who has collected several Examples to this Purpose.

of Prophaneness and Impiety, would he then make this the Ground of a Charge against our Superiours, who granted the Liberty of the Press, and who might have done somewhat to prevent it, or at least punish the prophane and impious Writer: What will be the Consequence? Why, in short, at this rate, Mr. *W* — himself is then become an Advocate for that very sort of Persecution which he so much condemns. I am apprehensive, that here at least, he may like my Way of arguing a little better than his own, and I hope now, that this Miracle may pass without Exception. There was nothing at all in it injurious to the Property of any Man, nor does he pretend to impute it to Magick Art: There's nothing impossible in it, considering our Saviour's amazing Power and Authority; and this Writer would find it hard to fasten any just Reflection on the subsequent Miracles any more than upon this: However, he's a Gentleman of Resolution, and loves to be adventurous; and therefore,

He will also take into Examination Jesus's Miracles of feeding many Thousands in the Wilderness with a few Loaves and Fishes, * which, he says, according to the Letter, are most romantick Tales. I confess I have several times been at a Loss what Notion to form of this Writer. Upon the first looking into his Piece, one might easily be led to imagine that he had never been used to the Laws or Methods of regular Disputation; but when I look'd back to his Title Page, and found him to have been FELLOW OF A COLLEGE in Cambridge; This, I thought, must correct that Mistake; the only way therefore I had to account for the Matter was, that he must certainly have left the University long ago, and so have very much forgot the Methods in which he was train'd up; for according to no Rules of Logick, or

† Mat. xiv. Verse 13. — 22. and Mat. xv. Verse 29. — 39.

Academical Institution, is it allowed to the Disputant, to anticipate the Judgment of his Readers, by monstrous and frightful Exclamations upon his Subject; nor is it permitted him to use Invektive or Raillery instead of Argument and Reasoning to the Point. But 'tis this Writer's Way, first to fall foul upon his Subject with very dogmatical and positive Reflections; and this being what he pretty strongly makes an Objection against the Clergy, one would have thought he should have been the more careful to avoid it himself: And as he has not, it's a great Aggravation of his manner of Writing. But thus he talks about most of the Miracles. When he mentions the Transfiguration, *that is the darkest and blindest Story of the whole Gospel, which a Man can make neither Head nor Foot of.* As to another, he puts on the Grimace, that he is *almost too grave to handle the Letter of that Story as he ought.* Another is *such a Rodomontado* with him, *that were Men to stretch, for a Wager, against Reason and Truth, none could outdo it.* And so here, to prepossess the Reader, before he offers at one Word in a Way of Argument, the Miracles we are upon are, *according to the Letter, most romantick Tales.*

He says he *don't in the least Question* Jesus's Power to magnify or multiply the Loaves: And what Reason can he assign then why he should not actually do it? 'Twas an Act not in the least injurious to any, but very beneficial, gracious, and most seasonably wrought; and being performed in the Presence, and for the Nourishment of so many thousand Witnesses, (who, if they had their Senses of seeing, feeling and tasting, were, I hope, competent Judges of the Truth of the Miracle) takes off all Suspicion of its being the Effect of Magick Art: For 'tis our Author's own Rule, *The more Witnesses of a Miracle, the better it is attested, and the more reasonably credited* *. Nor does he pretend there was any thing

* p. 44.

in this done for the *Service and Pleasure of luxurious Appetites*, which he insinuates as an Objection against the former. There's no such Difficulty as he imagines, to suppose *many Thousands of Men, Women and Children, should follow him into the Wilderness, and stay with him three Days and Nights, and that too without eating*. This is no Objection at all to the first of those Miracles, however he confounds them together; for they were certainly two distinct Transactions, as appears, besides several other Reasons I could give, from our Saviour's express Words, * which plainly speak of them as distinct: And as to the first, the Multitude were fed the first Evening after they came to him. As to the second miraculous feeding, let him take it, if he pleases, in the most rigid Sense, and suppose, not that there was a successive Multitude, of some coming and others going, or that some came sooner and others later, but that to a Man, they came altogether and staid, every one of them, the whole time that is mentioned; yet I don't think it at all impossible or improbable, no nor even if it be added, they had no occasional Refreshment: for though they are mentioned as continuing three Days with our Saviour; yet *three Nights* is Mr. W——'s own Addition, to divert himself and impose upon his Readers: The Evangelist says no such thing; and this makes a great Alteration in the Case, if we observe in how lax a Sense the Expression of *three Days* is used in Authors, namely, to signify some Parts of them; and then there need not be above two Nights supposed, as in the Instance of our Saviour himself, who tho' he was said to have been *three Days* in the Grave; yet was hardly there above half the Space of Time that three entire Days and Nights would have amounted to. There's no Necessity they should have continued there

forty Hours, and yet properly enough, according to the Use of the Phrase, might they have been said to have been *three Days* with him. However, we are under no necessity of supposing every Circumstance in its utmost Rigor: And yet if we were, Why should we think they would have been unwilling to abide with him under almost any Inconveniences; considering the great Character he bore among them, and the high Opinion they had of his Power? Especially as they came to be heal'd of their several Diseases and Infirmities, and brought their Friends to him for the same Purpose, in which our Saviour was most graciously pleased to fulfil their Desires. And who would not have endured as long Abstinence, for the sake of those Benefits they obtain'd by tarrying with *Jesus*? Does our Author consider the Greatness and Value of those Blessings, for those that were maim'd to be made whole, and have their lost Limbs supply'd? The Blind (whether so from their Birth, or by any Distemper or Accident) to receive the great Advantage and Pleasure of Sight; and those, who by being Dumb, were render'd incapable of Conversation, and depriv'd of all the Priviledges and Endearments that flow from it, to obtain the use of Speech.

He will also consider the Miracle of *Jesus*, curing the Paralytick, for whom the Roof of the House was broken up, &c *. He asks, Why the People did so tumultuate against the Door of the House? But how vain is this! When the Evangelist says, that upon its being given out, that he was in the House, straightway many were gather'd together, insomuch that there was no Room to receive them, no not so much as about the Door †. To such little Shifts are Men reduc'd, when they are resolv'd at all Adventures to oppose and contradict; tho' they have nothing solid to offer as an Objection.

* Mark ii. 1. Luke v. 18 &c.

† Mark ii. 2, &c.

'Tis a wonderful Improbability sure to imagine a large crowd of People got together, too many for the inside or Doors of some Houses to contain and admit; especially considering *there were Pharisees and Doctors of the Law sitting by, which were come out of every Town of Galilee, and Judæa, and Jerusalem: and the Power of the Lord was present to heal them* *. It can be no wonder at all, that as our Saviour's Fame was so much spread abroad, and his Capacity of healing Diseases so well known, that there should be such a numerous Resort, and so large a Concourse of People attending him. But perhaps he may have some subtle Meaning in the Word *tumultuate*; if he has, the sacred Text gives no countenance to any malignant Interpretation of their Conduct. *It's strange*, he says, *they had not so much Compassion on the Paralytick, as to give way to him*. But if they came themselves, or brought their Friends upon the same account, What could there be strange in it? Does he not know, that Persons in Calamity and Distress are principally urgent to obtain Relief in their own Case, before they shew much Compassion to others? Nor was it to be expected, if several of them labour'd under Infirmities, that they should give way to another, when perhaps their own Condition was such, as equally, if not more, to need our Saviour's Commiseration and Assistance; and tho' it's a very easy and common thing to fix Ladders or Stairs to the outside of a House in many Cases; yet he makes a mighty Difficulty of it, *that his Bearers could get to the Top of the House, with him and his Bed too*. This was a Signal and eminent Instance of their strong Persuasion, that our Saviour had Power sufficient to work so remarkable a Cure, as well as of his merciful Inclinations to apply that Power in so deplorable a Case. And it is so far

* Luke v. 17.

from being *strange*, that they should take this Method when no other would do, that it's much more *strange* to me, he should find any thing to object against it. How many things are daily done by climbing up the outsides of Houses and Ships, and much greater Burthens are drawn up than this could be; and as the tops of their Houses were flat, 'twas the easier to be done. The Tops of the Houses seem to have been in frequent Use for divers Purposes; as, for Conversation, Devotion, * &c. and therefore, I think Dr. *Lightfoot*'s Observation is very probable, that there was a Door of Communication from the Roof to the lower Part of the House; and if so, then breaking up a little of that Cement, of which the Floor was compos'd, might make sufficient Room to let down the Paralytick in his Bed †. But 'tis no uncommon thing for People, when the Humour takes them, to make a Mountain of a Mole-hill; and when they have nothing to say to the Purpose, to run down that side of the Argument they oppose with boisterous and swelling Words. Our Author found it necessary to call this Story a *Rodomontado*; because, in short, he had little else to say against it, but only to bestow ill Names upon it. He may see, if he pleases, how a learned Writer girds such Objectors against this Part of the Gospel §. But after all, what has our Author's whole Discourse to do with the Miracle? He has not so much as once touch'd upon that all this while; but has thought it sufficient to cavil at a particular previous Circumstance, which neither with all his Art can he make any thing of. But supposing for once, if that will please him, that the Circumstances were different, by which this unhappy Person was brought to be an Object of our Saviour's Compassion;

* Vid. Acts x. 9,
in Mark ii. 4.

† Vid. *Lightfoot*, Horæ. Hebr. & Talmud
§ Vid. *Casaub.* ad Baron. p. 219.

yet if the Cure was really effected, his Authority stands firm from such an Instance of Power and Goodness; Prophetical Predictions and other most plain Criterions concurring herewith.

He will also take into Consideration the Miracle of Jesus's curing the blind Man, for whom Eye-Salve was made of Clay and Spittle *. His Argument against it is this: *If this Eye-Salve was naturally medicinal, there's an End of the Miracle; and if it was not at all Medicinal, it was foolishly and impertinently apply'd.* These Dilemmas, I own, are very dangerous Weapons in Argument; but then they must be manag'd by a skilful Hand, or otherwise they are as liable as any other Methods of reasoning (in our Author's Scile) to be *foolishly and impertinently applied.* I am aware of a cunning Fetch in his use of the Word *Medicinal*, and in his putting *Naturally and not at all Medicinal* in Opposition to one another: Whereas the same Words should be used in both the Parts of the Distribution, only in one affirmatively, and in the other negatively. I'll therefore clear the Argument from Ambiguity, and then answer to it: The real Argument is this: The Eye-Salve had, in its own Nature, Properties or Powers sufficient to give Sight to a Man born blind, or it had not, &c. I answer then, it had not, and so *there is not an End of the Miracle: Nor yet was it foolishly and impertinently apply'd.* For it had first those Properties and Powers communicated to it, and then 'twas most wisely and pertinently apply'd. Our Saviour made it fit for his Purpose before he made use of it. And why should we call in question his Conduct upon this Account? Is he always bound to act according to Schemes we prescribe to him? Is he not at Liberty, in all his Works, to produce Effects in whatever Way he pleases, either by immediate Influence, or by the

* John ix.

use of intermediate subordinate Instruments? And this is so far from diminishing the Miracle, that it rather seems to greaten it; for the Clay he endued with such extraordinary Qualities seem'd, in it's own Nature, to be an obstruction to Sight, instead of being any ways conducive to it.

He also intends to consider *the several Stories of Jesus's raising the dead*, tho' he don't *question his actual bringing of the dead to life again*. Particularly he finds fault with the Account we have, that when he rais'd *Jairus's Daughter from the Dead*, he *turned the People out of the House, who should have been his best and properest Witnesses*. The turning them out seems to me to have been an Act of great Prudence and Goodness (as well as an Instance how distant our Saviour's Temper was from all Ostentation) for sure it could be by no means adviseable, that a young Woman, no more than twelve Years of age, should be expos'd to all that Consternation and Surprize that must be occasioned by the Sight of such a Tumult as were there: And especially, as several of them are represented under the deepest Impressions of Grief, and expressing the most passionate and bitter Concern. Besides, what occasion could there be to admit the Tumult? Oh they would *have been the best and properest Witnesses!* But there was no fear of Witnesses at all; there was not the least Doubt of her being actually dead. The excessive Lamentation of the Mourners, and the Peoples laughing him to Scorn, when he intimated to them that she was not brought under a perpetual Death, but such an one only, as should be no longer than a common Sleep, plainly prove this. And if she was really dead, as they all knew, they were capable enough of being Witnesses, when they should afterwards see her produced alive. Besides, there were five Witnesses to the Manner in which the Miracle was wrought; and among them, the Father and Mother, who I should think were the *best and properest*

Witnesses, who could easily distinguish whether their own Daughter was restored to life, or a supposititious Child was placed in her Room *.

He says, *Jesus's cursing the Fig-Tree for its not bearing Fruit out of Season*; upon the bare mention of it, appears to be a foolish, absurd, and ridiculous Act, if not Figurative. I shall take some Pains to examine this, and the rather, because a great Handle has been taken from hence to expose our Saviour's Miracles in general, and a fearful Out-cry has been made against it. And though I absolutely insist upon this Story as being *literally* true, yet I am willing to allow there was a figurative Meaning in it. Our Saviour had taken a great deal of Pains, by his Miraculous Operations, his Appeals to the Prophets, and indeed a variety of Arguments, to convince the *Jews* of his divine Mission and Authority: But these were all lost upon a set of Men, who were resolv'd not to yield to the force and evidence of Truth; but instead of regarding the Proofs laid before them, became so inveterate and malicious, as to impute his mighty Performances to the Influence and Assistance of some diabolical Power. Even they could not deny the Reality, no nor even the Power and Greatness of the Miracles; nor had they the Meanness to pretend there were any *Juglers*, such *strange Artists* as to perform those Works; but they ascrib'd them to a Power superior to that of Men; and out of hatred to him, blacken'd and vilify'd him as a Confederate with *Satan*. Now this was highly provoking, and deserv'd the sharpest Resentment: And therefore Christ seems resolv'd, after this, to be more upon the Reserve in his Discourse with them; and when he did speak, to express himself in a figurative Way; † and accordingly this cursing of the Fig-Tree seems to have had the same Design. *Grotius* tells us, "The *Jewish* People were represented and referred to by

* Vide Mark v. 22. &c.

† Matth. xiii. 10, — 16, 34.

the

“ the Fig-Tree, for it was not the time of Year
 “ for the Fig-Tree to bear Fruit. He had not
 “ therefore so much respect to the Tree in this Act,
 “ which if it was unfruitful, was no more to be
 “ blam’d in Spring or Summer time, than in Win-
 “ ter” *. I confess, I think with *Grotius*, there was
 a Moral, and a very useful one too, couch’d under
 this Action; but I must beg leave to dissent from that
 very great Man as to what follows: For I think it’s
 very probable, that at this time of Year Figs were
 commonly ripe in *Judea*, for ’twas but a little be-
 fore the Passover, and presently after the Hosannas,
 as *St. Matthew* and *St. Mark* represent it. Now the
 Passover was about the time of their putting the Sic-
 kle to the Corn †. For from thence the seven Weeks
 were to be numbred, and at the End of which fol-
 lowed *Pentecost*. And their offering their First-Fruits
 was to be seven Weeks before *Pentecost* §. It may
 still however, be thought difficult to account for *St.*
Mark’s way of Expression *: But there’s no Necessi-
 ty of understanding the *§* for, as relating to the
 Clause immediately foregoing, as though the Sense
 was, *Nothing but Leaves* was on the Tree, because
 the time of bearing Fruit was not come. But it may
 refer to a more distant Clause, and so be given as a
 just Account why *Christ* might come there with a rea-
 sonable Expectation of finding Fruit. For the Figs
 were not usually by this time gathered off from the
 Trees: Nor do we want frequent Instances of *§*

* *Salutem Populi Judaici in ficu figurati. Tempus enim non erat anni quo ficus fructum ferret. Non ergo arborem spectavit in hoc facto, quæ si infrugifera est, non minus culpa caret verno aut æstivo, quam hyberno tempore. Grotius in Marc. xi. 12.*

† *Deut. xvi. 9.* § *Comp. Lev. xxiii. 10, 15, 16.*

* *Mark xi. 13. And seeing a Fig-Tree afar off, having Leaves, he came, if haply he might find any Thing thereon: And when he came to it, he found nothing but Leaves; for the time of Figs was not yet.*

being thus used in *Greek* Writers. If *St. Paul* may pass at least for a good *Grecian*, 'tis easy enough to enumerate many Instances, where it is placed several Verses after the Clause or Sentence, to which it relates; as is observed by *Mr. Lock* and *Mr. Peirce*, the two late Commentators upon him. Now if this be allowed, the Sense will be plainly this: That *Christ* came, if haply he might find any thing thereon; and when he came to it, he found nothing but Leaves; though he came before the usual time of taking them off the Trees. And if we consider the Import of the *Greek* Words *καὶ σῶμα*, they do not certainly mean the time of bearing or having any Figs at all upon a Tree, but the time of their Ripeness and Use: And so in *English*, the Time or Season of any sort of Fruit, means the Time or Season of gathering and eating them. Nay, we have a particular remarkable Expression to this Purpose; we often say of the Growth and Fruits of the Earth, that such and such are in Season; which answers to the *Greek* Word *καιρός*. I will add a farther Confirmation of all this, for which I acknowledge my self indebted to the very learned *Mr. Whiston*: He referred me to *Mat. xxi. 34.* which removes all Doubt about the Expression; *καιρός καρπῶν*, or *the Time of the Fruit*, plainly signifies the Season of gathering them, because the Servants were sent to the Husbandmen to receive them. Though after all, there is one thing more to confirm my Interpretation, and that is, the unreasonableness of supposing our Saviour to go out of his Way to look for Fruit on a Tree, if it was such a time of the Year, that none, or however none ripe, could be expected from it.

I confess I am almost tired with tracing this Writer through all his Windings: But we have but one Story more left, against which he forms any particular Objections; and that is about *the Journey of the Wisemen out of the East*. I don't perceive there's any thing in what he says here, but what a common Reader may easily see through. But since he calls
the

the Frankincense and Myrrh they brought (*literally*) senseless and ridiculous Presents; and says, *The Fathers shall speak hereafter farther to the senselessness of this Story literally.* He may consider the Fathers never speak of it as a senseless Story literally taken; but think even the Presents that were brought to have been very significant and suitable. So *Irenaus*, "The
" wise Men, by the Gifts they offered, shew'd who
" he was that was worshipped; they offering Myrrh,
" because he was to die for Mankind; Gold, be-
" cause he was a King, whose Kingdom should have
" no End; and Frankincense, because he was
" God" *.

As to what follows in Mr. *W* —, I think it very much degenerates both in Thought and Style from what goes before: Witness his fantastical *Exhortation to Infidels and Apostates*, as he calls them; his childish Play with the Names of Mr. *Grounds* and Mr. *Scheme*: His Coarse and low Language, that *he shall soundly drub and maul Infidels*, and that *the Cockles of his Heart are rejoiced*. These are all things too mean to be insisted on, and I the rather forbear it, as I hope by this time he is ashamed of them himself.

* Vid. Dr. Whitby in Loc. who also quotes Tertullian and Origen to the same Purpose.





A N

A P P E N D I X

Chiefly relating to the present Controversy
between the Advocates for Christian
Revelation and their Adversaries.



SOMETIME after Mr. *Woolston* publish'd his Discourse on the Miracles of our Saviour, a Friend of mine put it into my Hands; upon reading it, I found several Exceptions to some of the Miracles, which, I apprehended, ought to be consider'd; and as I always took a great Delight in the Study of the Scriptures, was willing to review the Passages he referred to, and examine how far they were liable to those Observations he had made upon them. And as I had never before read so much as one of those antient Fathers he refers to, and seems to build upon; I thought I had a good Opportunity of acquainting my self a little with those Writings. I had indeed look'd into some of the Writers of the foregoing Centuries, but never went so far down as these he mentions. Upon these and some other Reasons, I at length was determin'd to draw up an Answer; to which I was farther encourag'd by the Importu-
nity

nity of some of my Friends; and having finished that, I now subjoin this Appendix, as a proper Place to suggest some farther Considerations.

Mr. *W* — seems very fond of allegorical Interpretations of Scripture. I shall express my Sentiments of that Method of Interpretation, in the Margin, in the Words of a late Writer *. I confess,
I think

* An Allegory, *says he*, is when one thing is said and another thing is intended; as *Quintilian* accounts for it, L. 8. c. 6, *Aliud Verbis, aliud sensu ostendit*. And thus *Jotham's* Parable, *Judges ix. 7.* and many of our Saviour's Discourses in the Gospels are Allegories. Now — I will not deny, that where the Things were in their own Nature and principal Design typical, it might well be supposed, that what was said of them might, without any Strain or Violence, be referred to the Things which they typified. This seems to have been the Nature and Design of the Sacrifices, and some of the Ceremonies under the Law: And thus particularly the Paschal Lamb was typical of *Christ our Passover, who was sacrificed for us*, 1 Cor. v. 7. And therefore it seems not unreasonable to me to allow, that what was said of it, that *a Bone of it should not be broken*, Exod. xii. 46. Numb. ix. 12. was to be fulfilled in Christ, which *St. John* (supposing Ps. xxxiv. 20. does not relate to Christ) has applied to him, making the Scripture to be fulfilled, *a Bone of him shall not be broken*, when Christ's Legs were not broken, as were those of the two Malefactors who were Crucified with him, *John xix. 36.* But to make plain and historical Narrations, — which neither in their own Nature are typical, nor are in the least hinted in the History to be prophetical; I say, to make these to be Allegories, that is (in the most improper Sense in which some Expositors use the Word) to be Types, appears to me to be very hard. And though the Modesty with which I think the Holy Scriptures ought to be treated, may hinder my saying that such Interpretations are never to be allowed; yet I think, we may safely say, we ought, for the sake of the Enemies of our holy Religion, to avoid as much as possible the giving the Scriptures such a Turn by our Interpretations; and nothing but the utmost Necessity, if there be, as I hope there is not, any such, should ever suffer us to admit of that way of explaining any particular Texts. — I am satisfied that what we have rendered (*Gal. iv. 24.*) *which Things are an Allegory*, ought to be thus translated — *which Things are allegorized*: And his Meaning is, that the Prophet *Isaiab*, whose Words he cites, v. 27. has from this History borrowed the Terms wherein he has expressed himself in a very fine and noble Allegory. This rend'ring is most exactly grammatical, as our own is not: For *ἀλληγορούμενα* being a Participle passive, it is very properly rendred *allegoriz'd*, but very improperly an *Allegory*. Now this alone sets the Apostle's Discourse in a quite different Light, and offers nothing but what is familiar in all Languages, and with all Authors, viz. by way of allegory to accom-

I think such a way of interpreting Scripture is, as much as possible, to be avoided. What a Notion must we have of them if they are, as Mr. *W* — particularly asserts as to the four Gospels, in no Part a literal Story, but a System of mystical Philosophy or Theology *. But indeed in his whole Discourse he seems not to understand the proper Force and Import of the Words *Type* and *Allegory*, though he makes

moderate ancient and famous Histories to their own Times, even when they were far from imagining that the things allegorized had the least Relation to, or were at all typical or prophetic of that to which they applied them. I may borrow an Instance to my Purpose from *Quintilian* in the Place before cited, where he tells us it was a familiar Allegory among the Greeks, to say *Dionysium Corinthi esse*, that *Dionysius* is at *Corinth*, the meaning of which is, that a Man is fallen from a State of Grandeur to a low and mean Condition; and herein they allegorized the Story of *Dionysius*, who having been a King in *Sicily*, and expelled thence for his Tyranny, went to *Corinth*, and there for a Salary taught School; though no one can imagine that they who used the Allegory supposed that *Dionysius*, or the change of his Fortune, was a Type of, or had any other Relation, than that of resemblance to the Person or Circumstances of him to whom they applied it. Thus when they said a Man had loos'd, or cut the *Gordian Knot*, they meant that he had conquer'd a great Difficulty; or a Man had dash'd against *Scylla*, while he endeavour'd to avoid *Charybdis*; they meant that by striving to avoid one Danger he had fallen into another, without thinking the old Stories were typical or prophetic of the Events, to which, by an Allegory, they accommodated them. Thus it became a Proverb among the *Jews*, *Is Saul also among the Prophets?* 1 Sam. x. 11. and ch. xix. 24. to signify any thing sudden, unusual, and unexpected, when they had no Thought that *Saul* was a Type or prophetic Figure of what happened. — I can't therefore but think that the supposing every thing to be originally design'd as an Allegory, because it may be, or has been allegorized, tends to great Confusion, casts a Blemish upon the sacred History, opens a Door for wild Enthusiasm, and tends to harden Infidels in their Prejudices against Christianity. — All Allegories are tropical Expressions, and nothing is allegorical any farther than it is tropical: — No History therefore, or Fact, related in proper Terms, and design'd to be understood so, can be an Allegory, whatever respect it may have to something else; because an Allegory is never to be understood literally, but only by way of Accommodation and Similitude. Besides, there is this Difference between a Type and an Allegory, that the Former respects something future, and the Latter something past. *Pierce's Dissertation on Gal. iv. 24.* at the end of his Paraphrase and Notes on the Epistle to the *Philippians*.

* p. 64.

so much use of those Terms and their Derivatives: They both of them seem to be relative Words, a Type supposes an Archetype, to which it stands related; and if the Archetype be real, the Type must be so too: Thus in consequence, if our Saviour's spiritual Operations upon the Souls of Men were ever typified, this implies that there were really such Types of him; would it not be thought very strange, if as our Saviour's Death was supposed to be typified by the *Jewish* Sacrifices; that yet any Man should deny there were any such Sacrifices, and that they were only related as *Typical, Figurative, and Parabolical*, and were *in no Part a literal Story*? If it be said the four Evangelists designed no more by their Relation, than that Christ would hereafter do mighty Works (not meaning that he actually in the Flesh did those Miracles recorded of him) this is an open Insult upon the Reason and Judgment of Mankind, as though they were not capable to distinguish between prophetical and historical Narrations, as well as a severe Charge of Unskilfulness or Deceitfulness on the Writers themselves. The Evangelists mention Time and Place, and the other concomitant Circumstances, by which matters of Fact are usually represented and distinguished; and if, in spite of this, People will call them only Prophetical and Parabolical, there can be no dependance on any Narrative whatsoever, and there's an end of all antient History at once: Besides, who ever can think it a just or proper way of speaking, to call parabolical and figurative Representations, the **TYPES** of real Facts.

And as little will the Word *Allegory* help the Case. An Allegory supposes something real to allegorize upon. Will any Man think, according to the Instances in my Reference, that though the Antients allegorize the Stories of *Diomysius*, the *Gordian Knot*, and of *Scylla* and *Charybdis*, that these Stories were not however *literally* true? 'Tis the same Case as to

proverbal Ways of Speech in most Languages; they are rather the Monuments and Memorials of some past Incidents and Circumstances, from whence at first they took their rise, and to which they have a Reference; and so, if any thing, are Proofs of those very Incidents or Facts. I own I think it very preposterous to treat the sacred Writers in this Manner: we have no Certainty at all, in this way, how to interpret them. One Man may allegorize them one way, and another, another, as Fancy or Humour leads; and so we may allegorize without end, which would bring the Scriptures under the greatest Contempt, and reduce our Holy Religion to the most wild and frantick Enthusiasm.

In the next Place, as to the Miracles: Although the Objections against them have been often repeated, and much insisted on; yet if we are willing to be determined by *Evidence*, I am apt to believe we shall find our selves under a Necessity of yielding to the Truth of them. There seem to me to be two general Heads of Argument necessary to be insisted on, in order to clear this Point, and which are, I conceive, so comprehensive, as to extend to, and obviate all the Objections that can be with any fairness urg'd against them; and they are

I. The Possibility that Miracles ever could be wrought, and

II. The Probability that there ever actually were such Performances.

The former of these, in my Opinion, is capable of strict Demonstration; and the latter, I think, has as many Degrees of the strongest Moral Evidence to support it, as any antient Facts whatsoever. Miracles, in the Nature of them, I imagine, import such Effects and Performances, as are, strictly speaking, above the natural Powers and Abilities of the Agent to accomplish; and this infers that in such Cases

Cases there must be the Assistance or Interposure of some superiour Being, in order to the Accomplishment of them. Juglers may play the most artful Pranks, and weak and credulous Minds may be imposed upon; yea, or let Men be supposed to arrive to the greatest Penetration and Insight into Astronomy, Chymistry, Mechanicks, or any Parts of the Mathematicks; and by virtue of this Sagacity, do what may seem strange to ignorant People: Yet still there are Millions of Effects, that cannot possibly be produced by any meer human Agent, according to his ordinary and common Capacities. I will instance in one, because it is a very strong Case, I mean the raising the Dead to Life. We cannot, indeed, precisely fix the Bounds of the Powers of Nature; but yet we can plainly apprehend what must be beyond them. For Instance, we do not know what secret Virtues there may be in Plants and Minerals; but we do know that bare Words can have no natural Virtue in them to cure Diseases, much less to raise the Dead: We know not what Force Imagination or Credulity may have in critical Diseases; but we know that a dead Man has no Imagination: We know also that Blindness, Deafness, and an inveterate Palsy, cannot be cured by Conceit: Therefore Deliverances in such Cases, as they are clearly above the Force of Imagination; so are they beyond the Powers of Nature*.

I say then, according to the first Head of Argument, that it is by no means impossible for a human Agent to produce such Effects, which are beyond all the possible Efforts of his natural Abilities. Now here the Being of a God, his being the first Cause of all Things, and the original Author of all those Powers and Capacities that any of his Creatures are, were, or ever can be possessed of, must be taken

* Vid. *Bishop Burnet's Expos. of the 39. Articles*, p. 62.

for granted; because they are Questions entirely previous to this we are upon, and fall under a very distinct Consideration. However, as to these Points, the Masters of Reason will find themselves most agreeably entertain'd by those incomparable Pens of Dr. *Clark*, and the great Mr. *Howe*: And therefore I say, taking these for granted, all that remains to be examined, lies in two Things, that is,

I. Whether God himself *can* produce Effects superior to the utmost Efforts of any human Power. And then;

II. Whether he can so far interpose, as by these miraculous Operations, whenever he pleases, to bear witness to any Person.

I. As to the first, the Relation we are supposed to stand in to him, as Creatures, plainly proves it, for the Effect cannot produce itself: Consequently, the Cause that did produce it, must have a Superiority of Power; and where there is that, there must be a Capacity of producing greater Effects than the Effect it self can have. Besides, his being the first intelligent Cause of all Things, immediately infers a Train of the most excellent and glorious Perfections, that must unavoidably follow from that Supposition; from whence might easily be prov'd his Power of producing Effects vastly (not to say infinitely) above those that can be produced by Men. Now the Power being allow'd, the only Question that remains is about the Application of it: And surely, when once the Power is supposed, there can be no manner of Difficulty in conceiving the Exercise of it. For a principle of Action to act, are Ideas that bear a very plain and easy Connection. If it be said he has the Power, but cannot apply or exert it at what Times or on what Occasions he pleases, this is saying he has, and has not the Power; that he can act and cannot act at the same time, which is a Contradiction. If then God has the Power of producing the greatest and most marvellous Effects, and can
apply

apply that Power on what Occasions he pleases, he can at any time by miraculous Operations bear Witness to any Person's Character and Commission.

II. We may consider what Probability there is that there ever actually were such Performances.

If God *can*, according to what I observed above, interpose to produce extraordinary Effects out of the common course of Nature, and which cannot be produc'd by the natural Abilities of the Agent, whom he employs as his Instrument; the Question then will be, whether he *will* do thus; or in other Words, whether 'tis congruous to his Perfections so to do on any Occasion. Now no one can doubt, if there was at any time a proper Occasion, but God would do it. For it is a necessary part of Wisdom for a moral Agent rightly to circumstantiate his Conduct, and to act agreeably to the Nature, State, and Season of Things. To say that no such State of Things, no such Occasion can possibly fall out, would, I think, be a very great degree of Presumption; because a Man that affirms this, talks with certainty where he has no certainty at all. If then, such an Occasion *may* fall out, he himself must be the most proper Judge when that is: For it would be preposterous to pretend that a moral Agent models his Conduct according to the respective States and Seasons of Things, without judging and determining when those States and Seasons are, according to which his Conduct is directed: And much more is this to be allowed as to the supreme Being. Thus far then seems to be pretty clear, that as God always had Power; so he always would interpose by miraculous Operations whenever he thought fit.

Let us then see what Grounds we have to believe that God has actually at any time thus interposed. Now as this leads us to the Consideration of matters of Fact, it must be remember'd there are but two possible ways of coming to the Knowledge of such Things; and they are, the Evidence of our own Senses,

Senses, and the Testimony of others. By the former we cannot possibly obtain the Knowledge of any Events brought to pass before our own times; so that all we have to depend upon, must be from the Testimony of others; and that is in this case as full, clear and strong, as in any Cases whatsoever that relate to matters of Fact so distant from our own Times. The Writings of the New Testament, wherein these Things are recorded, were after their first Composure no Secrets, they were in all Mens Hands, and were copied out freely by every one that desir'd it. We find within an hundred Years after that time, both by the Epistle of the Church of *Smyrna*, by *Justin* and *Irenaus*, not to mention *Clemens* of *Rome*, who lived in that time, or *Ignatius* and *Poly-carp* who lived very near it, That the Authority of these Writings was early received, and submitted to; that they were much read and well known; and though by the Negligence of Transcribers, some small Variations might happen among some of the Copies; yet it was not possible for any, that might have had the wickedness to do it, to have corrupted those Writings by any Additions or Alterations, it being so early spread into so many Hands, and that in so many different Places. This Narration gave great Scope to a variety of Enquiries; it rais'd much Disputing, Opposition and Persecution; and yet nothing was ever pretended to be prov'd that could subvert it's Credit, or invalidate the Truth and reality of the Facts specified in it. 'Tis true there was a Pretence that those wonderful Things were done by the Power of an evil Spirit; but this is both an Acknowledgment of the Truth of those Facts, and also of their being supernatural. Besides, what end could any evil Powers be supposed to serve by such Operations, in Confirmation of what is (our Adversaries themselves being Judges) a most admirable System of Morality? These Things were not done in the Dark, nor in the Presence of a few, in whom

whom a particular Confidence was put; but in full Day-Light, and in the Sight of great Numbers, Enemies as well as Friends; and some of those Enemies were both the most inrag'd and the most capable of making all possible Exceptions to what was done. Such were the Rulers of the Synagogues, and the *Pharisees* in our Saviour's time: And yet they could neither deny the Facts, nor pretend that there was any Deceit or Juglary in them. We have therefore (as Bishop *Burnet* infers from these Particulars) all possible Reason to conclude, that both the Things were truly done as they are related, and that no just Exception was or could be made to them. Nay, some of the bitterest Enemies to Christianity, how eager and industrious soever they have been to lessen and reduce our Saviour's Character, and cast a blemish upon his Miracles, have still maintain'd the reality of the Facts. Thus *Hierocles*, *Porphyry* and *Julian*, don't pretend to deny them, but only endeavour to disparage them. 'Twould be endless to insist upon all the Instances that might serve to corroborate the Credibility of our Saviour's Miracles, as well as to undertake the answering all those Suppositions that a fruitful Fancy, under the Influence of Prejudice, may raise against them. But this I must beg leave to say, is not the proper Method of managing such a Controversy: We must not build upon Suppositions, but Proof; and such kind of Proof as is agreeable to the Nature of the Thing: And all the World must allow that Testimony is as much the direct and proper way for the Proof of ancient Facts, as the mathematical Method is for the Objects it is conversant about. So that either these Miracles must be prov'd impossible or absurd, or the Testimonies we rely upon be overthrown by Testimonies of not only equal, but greater Weight and Credibility. I shall only add, that though my Argument upon this Head did, in the former Part of it, take in no more than what was applicable to any

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mere human Prophet; yet I am very far from having such low Thoughts of my blessed Saviour, who was *the brightness of his Father's Glory, and the express Image of his Person, by whom also he made the Worlds*, which are Things that can never be said of the greatest workers of Miracles whatsoever. Now if God can bear Witness to the Commission of any Person, the Argument certainly rises with Advantage as to his own Son, who was a *Man approved of God among the Jews, by Miracles, Wonders, and Signs, which God did by him in the midst of them, as they themselves also knew* *.

The Reader will observe that I have only contended for this, that God has really interposed in some cases to bear witness to a Person's Commission, without laying down any dogmatical Assertions as to the manner of that Interposure. It may be a Difficulty, whether it consisted in the Communication or Derivation of any new inherent Powers to the workers of Miracles themselves, or whether he himself immediately produced those amazing Effects upon certain Circumstances; such as a solemn Appeal to God, or the Invocation of the Name of *Jesus* by the worker of Miracles, or upon the Application and Faith of the distressed Persons themselves, expressed by any outward Signs. As we have Instances †. The latter of these seems to have been the case as to several Miracles recorded in Scripture, particularly, *Elijah* in two of those recorded of him, seems not to have produced those Effects himself, but they rather followed upon his Appeal to God; that a plain Distinction might be made between the true and false God §, and that he might be vindicated as a true Prophet of the Lord, and not be liable to the Imputation and Treatment of an Impostor †. And perhaps thus might God be supposed to act in

* Acts ii. 22.

† Acts v. 15, 16. Acts xix. 11, 12.

§ 1 Kings xviii. 24, 36, 37, 38, 39.

* 2 Kings i. 10, 11, 12, 13.

after

after times, when upon the Apostle's Invocation of the Name of *Jesus*, he immediately effected what was desired or expected. It seems not unlikely, that in this Respect there might particularly be a vast Difference between our Saviour and other workers of Miracles: He might have the Power in himself, and yet God be said, as in the Text abovementioned, to do those Miracles *by him*; because, as Mediator, he acted by virtue of the Father's Commission and Authority. I am not certain whether the Distinction I have hinted may not be supposed to receive some Countenance from *Acts* iii. 12. 16.

I hope now upon the whole, it will be allowed that I have, in a calm and inoffensive way, endeavoured a Vindication of our Saviour's Miracles. I think in all Controversies, Peace and Love are very much to be regarded, as well as Truth; and that Modesty and Diffidence of ones self very much become such fallible Creatures as we are in all our Disputes, even though we suppose our selves never so much in the right. Upon this Consideration, I have endeavour'd to avoid any Insults or Reflections upon those Gentlemen, who think fit to declare themselves the Adversaries of *Christian Revelation*. Nay, I have even avoided the very use of the Name of *DEISTS*; for however inoffensive that Word may be supposed to be in it's strict Signification, yet it is evident, that both in Conversation, and by Writers, it has been often used in such a way as is expressive of a great deal of Disgust and Resentment. Nor, though I have contended in favour of Revelation, will the Gentlemen, I hope, conclude in what I have said, that I have run out into any furious Transports or Excursions foreign to the Argument. In this Respect, I may possibly have disappointed Mr. *W*—, who desires nothing more than to be furiously attack'd from the Press. But even His unjustifiable Reflections upon the blessed *Jesus*, shall not provoke me to such a Temper and Spirit, as he strictly caution'd his Dis-

ciples against; 'Tis not indeed for one of my Province, and especially at such an unexperienc'd and early part of Life, to dictate to my Superiours, to circumscribe the Bounds of magistratical Authority, or prescribe to them any Rules about the measure and extent of Civil Liberty. Those that have the Honour and Dignity of such a Province, must be supposed a great deal better skilled in such matters, and are able (if they wanted Assistance) to procure much better Advisers. I shall only therefore declare for my own part, that in my Station of Life, I should never be so officious as to bring any Person into Trouble merely for disbelieving or disowning the Scriptures; for as I should have but an indifferent Opinion of those that are made Profelytes by such Means, so I should not be very industrious to obtain them. As Christians, I think, we generally allow that Persecution for any Principles or Opinions is not only contrary to natural Humanity, but what was very remote from the Temper and Disposition of our Blessed Lord and Master; and as Protestants, we have maintain'd the Liberty of private Judgment, and fix'd Persecution as an indelible Reproach upon divers Members of the Church of *Rome*, though in Justice and Honour to some other valuable Persons of that Communion, I must own I have heard them very heartily declare against it. I am really desirous to hear every one of the Arguments that can be alledged against the Authority of the Scriptures, and that they too should be propos'd in their greatest Strength, though still with Seriousness and Modesty: And if they are never to be answer'd any other way (though I am fully persuaded those hitherto produced may be answer'd without much Difficulty) I should not care, for my own part, to be instrumental to deliver the Maintainers of them over to the Secular Powers. No, I assure the World I have no such Opinion of the weakness of those Arguments, by which Christian Revelation is supported,
nor

nor of the most formidable Attacks that have been made against it by those Gentlemen, who distinguish themselves as our Antagonists, as to be distrustful of the Cause, upon a fair, impartial, and candid Consideration.

How many vain and weak Suggestions have been frequently offered against the Scriptures, which even the more judicious and sober sort of those, who have doubted of, or even disowned their Authority, have been ashamed of? No Body can pretend to deny the Possibility that God can reveal his Mind and Will to Mankind if he pleases: And as such a Revelation must unquestionably be a great Happiness and Privilege to us at any time, it is highly congruous at least, for a Being of such infinite Bignity and Benevolence to his Creatures to afford it; nay, the state and condition of Mankind upon several Accounts seems to make it probable he would do it, not to say, even necessary to suppose he has done it. But I need not now dwell upon the Reasons to be assigned for a Revelation in general, which have been offer'd to the World by many much better Hands than mine. As to that Revelation which we call the *Scriptures*, I think we have all the moral Evidence, that the nature of the Thing will admit of, to support the Credibility of it. We have a Narrative of certain Facts, as to which it is little less than impossible, that the first Relaters could either be deceived themselves, or be able to impose upon others: And several material Facts we have confirmed to us by some of the bitterest Enemies to these Writings. But it would be endless to repeat all that has, upon these Heads, been so often said already. What now do the Adversaries of Scripture say to all this? Have they been able to produce any authentick Accounts, any truer Narratives of things in Opposition, or do they so much as pretend any Evidence of this Nature on their Side, that will bear any tolerable Comparison with ours? Nothing less! We are, it seems, to be put off with allegorical Interpretation of Prophecies and Miracles; that

is, with a parcel of chimerical, fictitious, conjectural and fabulous Suppositions, for which there is not the least Foundation: But would any Man of sober Reason treat the lowest Degree of Evidence at such a Rate? Is it not much more a shame that such Things are to be put in the Balance against so much good Sense and Reason, as the ingenious Mr. *Ditton* has offered in his Controversy? But which is worse, how often have the Scriptures been vilified with the most reproachful Expressions; and spoken of in terms of the greatest Disdain and Contempt. When particular Passages have been recited out of it, and one expects to hear a rational Objection, you are immediately alarmed with a monstrous Out-cry, that they are all *Rodomontado's and most Romantick Tales*; and when the Advocates for Scripture are mentioned, they are treated with equal Indignity and Scorn: The whole Body of our Divines must be accounted a parcel of ignorant, or designing, knavish Men; notwithstanding the great Learning, polite Education, Integrity and well establish'd Reputation of many of them; notwithstanding the great Figure and Usefulness of some of them in the Commonwealth of Learning, as well as in the Church of Christ: Their Employment and the Scheme they pursue, must be represented under the genteel and polite Expression of Priestcraft; and their preaching, nothing else but *vending their brazen-fac'd Bulls and Blunders*. This is now the very pink of the Mode with some Men, the inferiour Tribe of Disputants in this Controversy. But, notwithstanding my backwardness to Persecution, no Body can imagine that such Management is to be justified or excused in them, which in one of our own side of the Question I must abhor. And yet I will not, even in this Case, appeal to the Civil Magistrate, but will deliver them over to the Censure and Chastisement of their own Friends, our more judicious and sober Adversaries; who as they have Sense enough to despise such a Conduct, so, I promise my self, will have

have the Honour to resent it. And indeed such kind of Writers seldom fail to bring Discredit both upon any Cause they handle, and also upon the Patrons of it.

There's one thing has restrain'd me from taking much Liberty in Declamations against the *Turkish Alcoran*, and that is, my inacquaintedness with that Language in which it was first written, and having nothing to depend upon but the Translation; and really it seems to me to be a great Instance of Unfairness and Presumption, for a Man to undertake the Contutation of any Systems of Doctrines or Laws, that are had in great Esteem and Veneration by whole Nations of People, without making himself, as much as possible, Master of those Systems, and getting as thorough an Insight into them as may be; which can never be done without consulting the Originals. It's forty to one, in such a Case, but that many of the Arguments produced are nothing else but mere Misrepresentation, and the Discoveries of a Man's pure Ignorance. And here perhaps Mr. *W*—'s *brazen-fac'd Bulls and Blunders* may come in well enough; for I am willing to keep in as many of his Elegancies as I can find a proper place for. But to return: —

I confess it appears very strange to me, that among so many Gentlemen, who take up the Cudgels against the Scriptures, there should be so few, who will be at the Pains to furnish and qualify themselves this way, which I should think indispensably necessary. 'Tis evident, the better a Man is acquainted with the Scriptures, and the more thorough Knowledge he has of the Originals, that generally speaking, the more his Prejudices and Objections are abated, and the more his Esteem and Value for those Writings is enhanc'd and improv'd. I need not, I suppose, here mention those very great Names in later times, who have been, and still are universally esteem'd, very strict and laborious Searchers after Truth, and very rational in their Inquiries; in whom this Observation has been fully and plainly
verify'd

verified: But it is not no rarity at all to meet with Men, who pretend to understand no more than their Mother-Tongue, and even there perhaps their Pretences are too large; and they very fashionably toss you off a Banter upon the Scriptures, and an Invective against Priestcraft.

I am afraid some Christians themselves, by the inconsistent Doctrines they have advanced, and the plainly mistaken Interpretation of some Passages of Scripture, have given too great a Handle to our Adversaries to frame Objections against the whole: But as I would not be understood to undertake the Defence of those Peculiarities; so I must remind our Adversaries, the Method they take is very irregular; they are not to answer in this Dispute to the particular Schemes of this or that Man, but to the Scripture it self.

To conclude: If the Bible is the Word of God, 'tis as much their Interest to receive it, as it can be ours; and a woful Hazzard they run if they do not impartially examine the Evidences of its being so. If it is not the Word of God, we are left at prodigious Uncertainty about some of our most valuable Concerns: But however, as the Being of a God, and the Light of Nature, is allowed by our Adversaries in this Controversy, we may consider that they themselves must agree with the Advocates of Christianity, in heartily espousing the Interests of Virtue; in promoting in the World the Performance of those respective Duties we owe to God, to each other, and our selves: And so must maintain all proper and devotional Respects to God, and join in promoting the several Offices of Justice, Humanity and Love, in the Observation of the Rules of Virtue and Sobriety, and in a Word, Goodness in its full Extent, and Latitude, and in all its Branches. *Believing that God is, and that he is a Rewarder of them that diligently seek him.*

F I N I S.

45; 5000 36.